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YOUNGSTERS



"I'M A PIRATE"

YOUNGSTERS

COLLECTED POEMS OF CHILDHOOD

by
BURGES JOHNSON

ILLUSTRATED
by
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FOREWORD

THESE rhymes make no pretense of consistency, or of theories about childhood. They are mostly bits of recollection, and records of experience, personal or vicarious. A great number of them have appeared before in "Pleasant Tragedies of Childhood," in "Rhymes of Little Boys" and companion volumes now out of print. There is no scheme of arrangement, except that some grown-up verses about childhood are brought together, and others having to do with babyhood are grouped near the end. Thanks are due the publishers of *Harper's Magazine*, *Everybody's*, *Life*, *Pictorial Review* and other friends, for permissions to reprint.

B. J.

Poughkeepsie, New York.

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YOUNGSTERS

*Slim woodland faun who stands upon the brink
Of that cool, unforgotten swimming-hole,
While spying, leaf-checked sunbeams seem to wink
A sly condonement of the hours you stole
From cramping seat and unrelenting book
In yon slave-laden galley known as school;
I note one backward, gay, defiant look
And then your shout ends gurgling in the pool.*

*I see you, boy, and standing closely by
I see a figure that you did not see—
A sprite with wind-blown hair and dancing eye,
Who leaped with you and laughed to find you free.
And while your gay companions, Wind and Sun,
Tousled your hair or peppered all your face
With tell-tale freckles when the game was done,
The sprite was near you in that grassy place.*

*Though you may leave me, lad I cherish so,
I bear no grudge because you draw away,
Save that you lure her with you as you go,
That mate you never saw, whose name was Play.
I know her now. Sometimes her laughing eyes
Shine kindly at me as she dances past.
No painted jade may trick me in her guise,
My heart so holds her image true and fast.*

*Departing boy, who trod that grassy place
Beside your well-remembered Lethe's pool
Which splashed so gaily when its glad embrace
Drowned every glooming thought of books and school,
I'll let you go ungrudging. Years unfold
Full compensations; dear lad, go your way,
If you'll but leave me some small rightful hold
On that gay sprite of yours whose name is Play.*

WHAT'S THE USE?

What's the use o' growin' up?

You can't paddle with yer toes
In a puddle—you can't *yell*
When yer feelin' extra well—

Why every feller knows
A grown-up can't let *loose*.
I don't *want* to be no older—
What's the use?

What's the use o' growin' up?

When I'm big I don't suppose
Explorin' would be *right*
In a neighbor's field at night—

I won't *like* to get my clo'se
All watermelon juice.
I don't want to be no older—
What's the use?

What's the use o' growin' up?

You couldn't ride the cow,
An' the rabbits an' the pig
Don't like you 'cause yer big,

I'm *comfortablest* now—
P'r'aps I *am* a goose.

WHAT'S THE USE?

I don't want to be no older—
What's the use?

What's the use o' growin' up?
When yer growed, why every day
You just have to be *one thing*.
I'm a pirate, er a king,
Er a cowboy—I can play
That I'm *anything I choose*.
I don't want to be no older—
What's the use?

BEING GOOD

What 's the use of being good?

It aint really any fun;

And there 's no one ever knows,

'Cept my conscience, I suppose,

All the noble deeds I done;

And I feel so like a sham.

I don't want to be no gooder

Than I am.

What 's the use of being good?

If they notice it at all

They just pat me on the head,

Or they show me off, instead;

And the folks that come to call

Say "How cute!" and "Little lamb!"

I don't want to be no gooder

Than I am.

What 's the use of being good?

All the fun 's the other way—

All the mischief and the noise

And the pranks with other boys—

All the goodies hid away,

And your fingers in the jam!

I don't want to be no gooder

Than I am.



DISPROVED

People tell me I must do
All the growing that I can;
For they say I'll soon be through—
I won't grow when I'm a man.

That is why I'm fed so much
Nasty stuff to make me grow,
Tapioca, squash and such;
But I don't believe it's so!

Daddy's old. *He* won't be fed
Things for which he doesn't care.
Yet I notice that his head
Keeps on growing through his hair.

A REGGERLER WRIGGLER

When you was as little as me, did you care
If they made you stand still while they fooled with
your hair,

And combed it and brushed it and told you "There,
there!"?

Nurse says, when she lays down the comb with a
slam,

I'm a reggerler wriggler,—maybe I am.

When I'm doing my lessons or eating my meals
I have to be still as a mouse, till it feels
As if I *must* pound on the floor with my heels.

At church it is awful,—the folks all declare
I'm a reggerler wriggler while I am there.

It is n't so easy, this trying to keep
Quite still in the daytime,—it hurts me a heap.
And they seem to forget that I'm still when I sleep.

I think little boys who sit still are a sham;
I'm a reggerler wriggler, that's what *I* am!

LOSTED

I feel so far from anywheres!
Perhaps my family
Has got so many other cares
They've all forgotted me.
I s'pose I'll starve to skin an' bone
If I stay losted here alone.

My little dog, he founded me,
An' wagged his tail an' whined,
But he can't lead me home, for he
Is taught to walk behind.
And so I'm crying yet, becuz
I'm just as losted as I was.



RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME

I was so certain yesterday
It would be fun to run away;
It never once occurred to me
How dreadful lonesome it would be.
And if this really is a cow
I'll hurry home to mother now.



WHEN I GET INTO BED

I'm never frightened in the dark,
Though I am very small;
I never sit all scared and hark
For Ogres in the hall.
But when my prayers are said
I have one awful dread,
That something waits to grab my toes
When I get into bed!

I try to think of pleasant things
Each time I get undressed;
And how each day no evil brings
If children do their best.

But the thought comes in my head,
As I'm turning down the spread,
That *something's* going to grab my toes
As I get into bed.

And when there 's nothing more to do,
With bedclothes open wide,
It makes me shiver through and through
A-trying to decide
Which foot shall go ahead,
'Cause I'm sure I'd tumble dead
If something ever grabbed my toes
As I get into bed.

WHAT PUZZLES ME

There's something I'm *awfully* anxious to know,
I think it's important as it can be—
S'pose it had happened beforehand so
That I was somebody else but me?
Then some other boy would be your little boy,
An' love you more than a tongue-can-tell;
I wonder would he be his mother's-joy,
An' smooth her headaches to make them well?
—'*Cause I think it's funny as it can be,*
That you is you, an' me is me.

I've worried and bothered for most a day,
'Termining what I should ever do,
If things were arranged in a different way,
An' you should be somebody else but you.
You'd live in some other place but here—
Far away, maybe—but anyhow,
I'm perfectly positive, Mother dear,
I'd love you 'zactly as much as now.
—*But I think it's funny as it can be,*
That you is you, an' me is me.

If you was somebody else but you,
P'r'aps we'd meet in the street some day,

An' *I'd* be p'lite an' say "Howdedo!"
An' "What a *nice* little boy!" you'd say.
Then we'd walk for almost a block, before
I'd tell you just who I was—an' then—
You wouldn't be somebody else anymore,
An' I'd be your little boy again.
—*An' I think it's funny as it can be,*
That you is you, an' me is me.



THE MONARCH

I am lord of the land and the sea,
I am king of the jungle and cave;
Wild animals cringe at my knee,
And fish at my word swim the wave.

I fearlessly crawl 'neath the bed,
Where teddy-bears lurk in the dark;
Or I hunt the dim closet instead,
Where roam all the beasts of the ark.

I am lord of the sea and the shore,
On carnage I gaze unafraid;
I shrink not at squeak or at roar,—
I know how such noises are made.

I stride through my nursery domain,
And the bathtubby ocean I scan;
While faithfully march in my train
Weird creatures of cotton and bran.

SUPPLANTED

Seems zif everything nice is done
Just for that newest kid.
Once, when I was the youngest one,
I never got spanked or chid.
I've pricked his leg with a pin, for fun,—
I'm awfully glad I did!

SPRING TONICS

I love it when the folks begin
To give us kids our medicine;
I've tasted lots o' things that's worse.
I'm oldest, so they feed me first,
An' when it comes their turns then I
Just yell an' dance an' make 'em cry!



STRATEGIC

Whenever I am playing, and I want to rest a bit,
I can't lie down a minute, or even stop to sit,
But I hear a Grown-up say,
"You're tired out at play!
Come! Lay aside your little toys,—they'll do another day."

And so I have decided that I really can't afford
To have 'em find me resting of my very own accord,
'Cause some one comes along
Who says "You are not strong,—
You had n't oughta play so hard, it certainly is wrong."

That's why I keep a-skipping and a-running in and out
Until I'm really certain that no Grown-ups are about;
And then I slip away
Just a minute from my play,
And rest as hard as possible to last me through the day.

GRACE

Dear Lord, bless my bread and meat,
And everything I drink and eat,
And let them make me well and strong
To keep from ever doing wrong.
I thank thee, Lord, each day again
For guarding little boys. Amen.

'MEMBER?

'Member, awful long ago—
Most a *million* weeks or so—
How we tried to run away
An' was gone for most a day?
Your Pa found us both, and then
Asked if we'd be bad again,
An' we promised, by-um-by.
Do you '*member?* So do I.

'Member when I tried to crawl
Through that hole beneath your wall,
An' I stuck becuz my head
Was too big? Your Mother said,
When she came to pull me through,
S'prised *you* didn't try it too.
An' you did it, by-um-by.
'Member? *Do y'?* So do I.

'Member once, when you an' me
Found your mother's pantry key?
All the folks stayed out till late,
An' we ate an' ate an' *ate!*



Ma was s'prised, so she confessed,
That we didn't eat the rest.
An' we *did* it, by-um-by.
Course you 'member? So do I.

'Member when your Mother said
'At she wisht I'd run an' do
All the mischief in my head
All at once an' get it through?
S'pose we did, why maybe then
We could do it all *again!*
Guess we could if we should try.
Will y' sometime? So'll I.

EXCUSES

Sometimes when I'm special naughty
In some bran'-new way,
An' my sister an' the nurse
Only get me actin' worse,
Daddy's told, an' when I'm caught, he
Asks what I've to say.

Daddy has some special uses
For a slipper he
Keeps upon his study shelf,
So I start to 'scuse myself,
An' I think up lots of 'scuses
Quickly as can be!

Daddy coughs, an' then confesses
That sometimes he does
P'raps misjudge me by mistake,
Then he gives my hand a shake.
(But I sometimes think he guesses
Just how bad I was!)



GOOD HUNTING

Table-leg Jungle is dark and still,
There 's snakes in the Carpet Glade,
And lions and tigers on Sofa Hill,
But I'm never a bit afraid.
My dog, I know, is a trusty brute,
And I've got a gun that 'll really shoot.

Once there was Indians under the bed,
But I hunted 'em all away;
There 's elephants hiding there now instead—
They're perfectly safe to-day,
'Cause I'm near the cavern of Easy-Chair,
And I scent the track of a Teddy Bear!

If I was like nurse or like baby Sis,
What never has fired a gun,
I guess I would n't be brave as this!
They'd both of 'em cry and run.
But I'll stalk him down and I'll shoot him through,
And I'll make him into a Teddy-stew.

A DIFFERENCE

Whenever I can't go to sleep
 Though I have said my prayers and all,
Around the room queer noises creep
And lights and shadows dance and leap
 Above me on the wall.

The dark gets full of dreadful things
 That tiptoe round and round my bed—
I hear the rustling of wings
And little creaks and whisperings—
 I dassent turn my head.

But when there sounds upon the stair
 My mother's footstep, drawing near,
The dark just turns to empty air—
And all around there's nothing there
 To cause a bit of fear.

Then I imagine, one by one,
 The things that scare me most of all;
They make the little shivers run
Along my back. It's lots of fun—
 While mother's in the hall!

IN THE SWING

I love to swing so high, so high,
That all the world is turned around;
My feet are standing on the sky,
And far above me is the ground.

I love to swing so high, and see
The leafy boughs go rushing by,
And view the world beyond the tree,
With nothing near me but the sky.

Up, up I go,—and hardly stir
For one long happy second; then
With a delicious rush and whirr
The world turns right side up again.

NO TRAVELER

I 'd love to ride on railroads every day
And sit up by the window,—would n't you?
To watch the world all rush the other way
And make believe where it is running to.
But once—it was n't far—
I took kitty on a car,
And I guess there 's lots of other things a cat 'd
rather do.

A kitty does n't care about the view,
And she 's frightened by the jiggle of the floor;
It makes you feel ashamed to have her mew,
But she's stronger'n she ever was before!
Though traveling is fun,
With almost any one,
I never want to travel with a kitty any more.



WAS YOU EVER SPANKED?

Was *you* ever spanked? I ain't sorry a bit
I scratched at my brother an' hollered an' spit.
Then they pulled me away, an' I kicked an' I yanked.
Was *you* ever spanked?

Was *you* ever spanked? The times I've been good,
Why, nobody's cared, an' I ain't understood.
If I die, they have only themselves to be thanked!
Was *you* ever spanked?



THE ANXIOUS FARMER

It was awful long ago
That I put those seeds around;
And I guess I ought to know
When I stuck 'em in the ground.
'Cause I noted down the day
In a little diary book,—
It 's gotten losted somewheres and
I don't know where to look.

But I 'm certain anyhow
They 've been planted most a week;
And it must be time by now
For their little sprouts to peek.
They 've been watered every day
With a very speshul care,
And once or twice I've dug 'em up
To see if they was there.

THE ANXIOUS FARMER

I fixed the dirt in humps
Just the way they said I should;
And I crumbled all the lumps
Just as finely as I could.
And I found a nangle-worm
A-poking up his head,—
He maybe feeds on seeds and such,
And so I squushed him dead.

A seed 's so very small,
And dirt all looks the same;—
How can they know at all
The way they ought to aim?
And so I 'm waiting round
In case of any need;
A farmer ought to do his best
For every single seed!

WISDOM

Often when I want to talk, grown-ups say I oughtn't,
For they think what I would say cannot be important.
I am told that when I'm grown, then I may be bolder,
Wisdom will be in my head when I've gotten older.
Tell me, will it, when it comes, set my head a-hum-
ming?

But I mostly want to know—will I feel it coming?



COWS

Who 's afraid of a cow?
They 're so gentle and kind
You can go up quite close
And they none of 'em mind;
And they like little girls, so I 've heard people
say—
But I wish, O I wish they was further away!

Pooh—who 's afraid?
They 're as good as can be,
An' one 's a child-cow that is younger than me.
They give us good milk—an' there 's nothing to
fear—
But I wish, O I wish that my Daddy was here!

THE PUPPY CLASS

I tell them all that A 's for APPETITE
And B 's a BONE, and C 's a Pussy CAT,
And though they do not pay attention quite
The way they should, I think they growled at that.
They 've been to school all day there on the mat,
And yet they will not learn their letters right;
Their little tummies are so very fat
I fear their brains are crowded just a mite.

I cannot make them consecrate their thought,
Not even though I scold them some, and frown.
They don't get half the discipline they ought,
Their eyes are so affectionate and brown!
I don't believe that scholars *can* be taught
Who lick your face and bark and tumble down.

WITH SISTER'S DOLLS

Dolls are silly things to play with,
There 's so much a boy *prefers*;
But at times I have to stay with
Sister when she tends to hers.

And besides I often find her,
(For you know how young she is!)
Needing some one to remind her
Of her 'sponsibilities.

*Anne and Lucy, Tot and Ted,
Do you dollies s'pose
That it 's right to go to bed
Wearing all your clo'se?
Your Mamma 's too young, I s'pect,
To be scolded for neglect!*

I 'm a year and one month older
Than my sister is, and she
Can't expect (so Mother 's told her)
To sit up as late as me.
So each night, when she is sleeping,
It 's my duty for awhile
Just to see if she is keeping
All her dolls in proper style.

Anne and Lucy, Tot and Ted,

Listen here to me!

Every night you go to bed

Wicked as can be.

Don't you s'pose that Someone cares

If you never say your prayers?



THE DOG'S TURN

They 're at me all the day,
There 's not an hour between!
I have no time for play—
I think they 're very mean.
For every minute 's taken up in being gotten
clean.

They wash and clean and scrub,
Although I 've clothes to wear;
All day they comb and rub,
And brush my teeth and hair.
At five o'clock I have a bath while grown
folks come and stare.

Now, Pete! Don't leave this spot
Until I 've gotten through.
The things that hurt a lot
Are what is best for you—
I guess what 's good for baby boys is good
for doggies too.

THE EAVESDROPPER

If little boys don't hurry off to bed
On Christmas eve, an' try to go sleep,
But stay awake an' hide around an' peep
(Er so the grown-up folks have always said),
Then Santa Claus 'll frown an' shake his head,
An' gather all their presents in a heap—
Espeshully the ones they 'd wanta keep—
An' give 'em all to other boys instead.

But every year I 've wanted so to see!
An' maybe he 'll not find me hiding here.
But if he *did*, an' left no toys for me,
I 'd be ez glad I peeked—er pretty near.
Unless he was so cross that maybe he
Would take away the things he left last year!



MY LITTLE DOG AND ME

My little dog knows just as much
As lots of people do.
He can't do sums, er three times three,
Er read er write like you an' me,—
But what 's the use of sums an' such
I never really knew.

Of course he ain't a cherabim,—
He 's playful as can be!
He don't shut doors er wipe his feet,
An' maybe he 's not always neat;
But people that don't care fer him
Don't hafter care fer me.

PUTTING DOLLY TO BED

A mother has so many cares
 There 's little time to play.
She 's combing out the snarly hairs,
Or darning holes or mending tears,
Or kissing hurts or soothing scares
 All through the live-long day.

But I and mother often say,
 Though tiring duties heap
Upon our shoulders as they may,
The nicest duty of the day
Is when we 've put the toys away
 And rock our babes to sleep.

DUTY CALL

On Sundays I jus' love to dine
With Aunty Jane an' Emeline,
An' stay t' hear a temp'rance trac'.
I love it, 'cause when I get back
My muvver says, "Poor little sweet!"
An' gives me heaps o' things to eat.

PRAYERS

When it is bedtime, every day,
I show my children how to pray;
I never scold or even frown
Whenever any tumble down,
But I am patient as can be
And make them copy after me.
Their prayers are very short indeed—
There is so little that they need.



A FABLE

Said a Little Boy to a Honey Bee,
"You'd not be happy if you was me!
'Cause *I* don't get enough time to play—
I can't do *half* what I want, all day.
You stay where it's sunny, all chock full of
honey—
It must be funny to live that way.
You have a *lot* better time than me!"
Said the Little Boy to the Honey Bee.

Said the Honey Bee to the Little Boy,
"Yes, life is jolly and full of joy!
I hum and bumble and buzz away,
But it's mostly work and it's seldom play,
And, rainy or sunny, I toiled for the honey
Which you (how funny!) ate up to-day.
I don't know why, but I buzz with joy!"
Said the Honey Bee to the Little Boy.



A LITTLE GIRL AND A PUSSY-CAT

Said a little girl to a pussy-cat:

“It ’s jolly to make you play!

How soft you purr when I stroke your fur,

And your claws are all tucked away!

I love you ever so much for that,”

Said a little girl to a pussy-cat.

“But oh, there ’s a terrible thing I ’ve heard,

That brings great sorrow to me:

You killed a poor little baby bird

That lived in our apple-tree.

You can’t be dear to me, after that,”

Said a little girl to a pussy-cat.

“O little maid,” said the pussy-cat,

“You are gentle and kind, they say,
To bird and beast, but did n’t *you* feast

On chicken for lunch to-day?

And are n’t there feathers upon your hat,

O little maid?” said the pussy-cat.

“Oh, I ’ll be I, and you ’ll be you,

As long as this world shall be.

If you ’ll be as good as you can for you,

I ’ll try to be good for me.

So let ’s be friends and agree to that,

O little maid!” said the pussy-cat.

MOTHER'S DAY OUT

When I was quite a little boy
I learned to put myself to bed;
I put away each book and toy,—
'T was such a help, my mother said.
And now I never even mind
The clothes that button up behind.

Since I was six I 've grown so large
That days when mother needs a rest
She puts small sister in my charge,
And I can get her all undressed.
I even hear her say her prayers,
And no one needs to come upstairs.

When mother has a lot to do
On any morning, if I choose
Then I can dress my sister, too,
And even button up her shoes.
I 'm always such a help, you see,
My mother 's very proud of me.

BEDTIME STORIES

All the very nicest things
In the stories grandma told,
All the giant-killers bold,
All the fairy folk with wings,
Some in prose and some in rhyme,
Happened "Once-upon-a-time."

And I wished with all my heart
Once-upon-a-time was now!
For I made a solemn vow
I 'd have taken mighty part
In those deeds of prose and rhyme,
Of that once-upon-a-time.



TEA-PARTIES

I should enjoy, if I was let,
Tea-parties nearly ev'ry day.
It is the nicest kind of play—
With dishes from the kitchen set,
And all the cookies we can get,
And tea that 's made the cambric way.
I usurally like to stay
Until the food has all been et.
And then, although I 'm really glad
To leave, it 's more polite, you know,
To say: My dear, it makes me sad,
But I must call my dolls and go."
(I 'm glad my manners are n't as bad
As those of other girls I know!)

CHRISTMAS MORNING

Yesterday I tore some lace—stuck my finger through
it;

Day before I made a face—no one saw me do it.

Once I splattered with the ink—got my dress all
spotted,

And there 's other things I think that I have for-
gotted.

Do you s'pose HE came last night? I was always
taught he

Would n't bring a single mite to a child that 's
naughty!

But I guess if Santy's house has some children in it,
They 're not quiet as a mouse every single minute.

And I guess that Mrs. Claus told him, if he let her,
Not to blame this child, because his are n't any
better!



THE CHERUB

If that 's a cherub, I don't see why
They ever should call me one:
My face ain't round like an apple pie,
An' I have n't a couple of wings to fly,
But legs that 'll jump an' run.
If that 's a cherub, it seems to me,
There 's nicer things that a boy could be.

If cherubs are really made just so,
Then how can they ever play?
There is n't a place but clouds to go,
Or just keep fluttering to and fro,
Or stand on their chins all day.
I s'pose it 's easy to soil a cloud,
And people with feet are not allowed.

If I was really a cherub, though,
'T would be sort of fun to fly.
And parents would n't keep teasing so
If I 'd been out in the rain or snow,
To see if my feet was dry.
And if I ate loads of pie and cake,
Then all outdoors could have stomach ache.

FICKLE

New dolly, you are very sweet!

With lips, an' teeth, an' truly hair!
And you can bend your hands an' feet,
Instead of sprawling here an' there,
And you can close your eyes up tight,
Instead of staring, day an' night.

I am so very proud of you

I know now just how mother feels,
When I am dressed my nicest, too,
And there is company to meals.
Us mothers take a lot of pride
In pretty children at our side.

I think I 'll call you Anna Belle,—

You must n't let it make you vain,—
Or maybe you are Lady Nell;

My rag-doll's name was only Jane.
I hope she won't feel bad, but—well—
I re'lize, now, that she was plain.



CLOCKS

The clock I go to bed by is so very wee and small,
The big hand gets around it in almost no time at all;
And after tea, when bedtime is half a nour away,
The little minutes on it are the shortest in the day.

I wish that little bedtime clock was hanging here
instead,
And then they 'd use this kitchen clock for sending
me to bed.
When I 'm waiting for my luncheon, it 's so terribly
slow;
It has the biggest minutes of 'most any clock I know.

AMBITION

I've shoed my horse and fed my cow,
And I am mending houses now;
I think I'll be, when I am old,
A farmer or a blacksmith bold.
Unless I find that I prefer
To be sometimes a carpenter.

I've learned so much, though I am small,
Perhaps I'll grow to be them all.



RESPONSIBILITIES

I've learned to say my evening prayers
While nurse is waiting in the hall;
I have so many heavy cares
I like to think about them all.

I tell what mischief I've been in,
And every night I never fail
To tell all little brother's sin,
And no one calls me "tattle tale."



SOAP BUBBLES

If I knew magic, and could do
Just anything I wanted to,
I'd blow a bubble strong and wide
Enough for me to get inside.

We'd sail far up into the blue,
And when it burst and went away,
I'd visit—for a day or two—
The place where vanished bubbles play.

A MOTHER'S HOPES

Sometimes my mother confesses,
If she smiles when she's making my clo'se,
That she's sewing fond hopes in my dresses,
And weaving sweet dreams as she sews.

And so, when I'm stitching and mending,
And all my doll's dresses I sew,
I smile to myself while pretending
The things they will do when they grow.



IRONING DAY

I don't see why the grown-ups care
Each time they find a rip or tear,
And seem to feel so badly, just
Because my clothes get soiled and mussed.

My children keep *too* clean and neat,—
And dirty dollies are a treat.
I find it quite the nicest play
To wash and iron every day.

INCORRIGIBLE

I guess I'm bad as I can be,
'Cause after uncle found and yanked me
Out of that old apple-tree,
And after dad came home and spanked me,
And while my teacher told me things
About the narrow path of duty,
And how an education brings
The only truly joy and beauty,
And while she said she didn't doubt
They'd wasted all the good they'd taught me,
I had to grin, to think about
The fun I had before they caught me.

TAKING BROTHER'S PICTURE

He felt quite miser'ble, I know,
Dressed in his Sunday best;
They pinched his head and sat him so
He was uncomfyest.
And then that silly picture-man
Said "Look as pleasant as you can!"

THE FISHERMAN

I've sittid here for days and days
And haven't caught a thing;
I've tried a lot of diff'rent ways
Of jigglin' the string,
I've held the pole as still and firm
As anyone could wish.
I don't believe my angle worm
Has seen a single fish!



THE OCCASIONAL ANGUISH OF BEDTIME

When it is sister's party night,
It's hard to have to go
Straight off to bed. It isn't right!
You'd think they ought to know,
Or maybe no one loves us, and
That's why they treat us so.

EVENING IN THE PANTRY

It's lots more fun to eat a pie
When grown-ups are not sitting by;
And jam and tarts and all such stuff,—
Then you can really eat enough.
But we're afraid there's much too few
For now and for to-morrow too!



HIS FIRST AFFAIR

I told Eliza Mary Ann
We'd marry when I was a man.
I told her just how glad she'd be
To marry such a man as me.
But now we've quarrelled, guess that I
Will go to war, and maybe die.



A RAINY PICNIC DAY

It's raining—raining hard as cats and dogs,
It always did when days we planned for came.
I wish that we were ducks or little frogs,
Then we could have our picnic just the same.
It seems zif little children's pleasure days
Could be put off in such a lot of ways.

PLAYING DOCTOR

Some day I'll be a doctor-man,
So now I practise all I can.
We caught the cat, and Rover, too,
And tried to act as doctors do.
But baby howled and spoiled it all,
By bringing Aunty from the hall.

THE RIDER

We've rode a thousand miles or more,
My horse and I, across the floor.
And when I've gone another mile
I'll maybe let him rest awhile.

My mother thinks this horse by far
The best of all the steeds there are;
For though I gallop all the day
I don't get *very* far away.

PLAYING IN THE BARN

The barn's the nicest place to play:
I guess 'twas meant for little boys.
You shout and tumble in the hay,
With nobody to mind the noise.
And there's an awful dang'rous swing
That flies as high as anything!



OMNISCIENCE

I've been to school at least a hundred days
Or maybe more;
My brother, he just stays at home and plays,—
He's only four.

I'm old. I know that gnomes and elves and such
Are just a fraud.
There's no one 'cept my daddy knows so much,
And, maybe, God.

SPEAKING THE FIRST PIECE

It's hard, when I'm dressed up so nice,
And have my piece so well prepared,
To have them sit as still as mice,
And know that I am getting scared.
You can't expect a child like me
To know her pieces perfectly.



SPRINKLING THE BABY

My mother says I'm much too small
To have a garden of my own.
She says I take no pains at all
To tend my plants, from spring to fall;
That's why they haven't grown.
She says they can't get tall and strong
Unless they're watered right along.

I want to let my mother know
That I can truly do a lot.
I'm big enough to help, and so
I'm making baby sister grow,—
She's such a tiny tot.
And things won't grow, the folks all say,
Unless they're watered every day.



MOTHER WANTS ME

Tell me what time it is, wise little flower!

Answer me truthfully, now when I blow.

Off goes your bonnet to show me the hour,

All your white feathers go flying like snow.

Off goes your bonnet—and plainly you say,

“Mother is wanting you, hurry away!”

Mother is wanting me, so I must run,

But there's so much in this garden to do!

Not more than half of my playing done.

Why did I ever ask questions of *you*?

BALLADE OF THE LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT.

The furrow's long behind my plow—
My field is strewn with stones of care,
And trouble gathers thick enow
As years add silver to my hair.
Could I an easier path prepare
For baby feet that start to mount?—
Save them a bit of wear and tear,—
And show the little things that count?

I see a tiny maiden bow
O'er slate and pencil, in her chair:
A little pucker on her brow,
A little tousle in her hair.
And one wee tear has fallen where
The crooked figures grin and flout;
My heart goes reaching to her there—
I love the little things that count!

Arithmetic is such a slough—
A pilgrim's swamp of dull despair,
But Discipline will not allow
My hand to point a thoro'fare.
Harsh figures face us everywhere,

LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT 79

O'erwhelming in their vast amount;
Must she so soon their burden bear?—
I love the little things that count!

Stern Teacher, must she ever fare
Alone to Learning's chilly fount?
There is so much I long to share—
I *love* the Little Things That Count!

ENVY

There are lizards in the pool,
Pollywogs and fishes fleet;
Swimming where it's wet and cool,
Finding tiny things to eat.
They don't have to go to school,
They can always wet their feet.
P'raps it gives them extra joy
'Cause they're not a little boy.



IN SLUMBERLAND

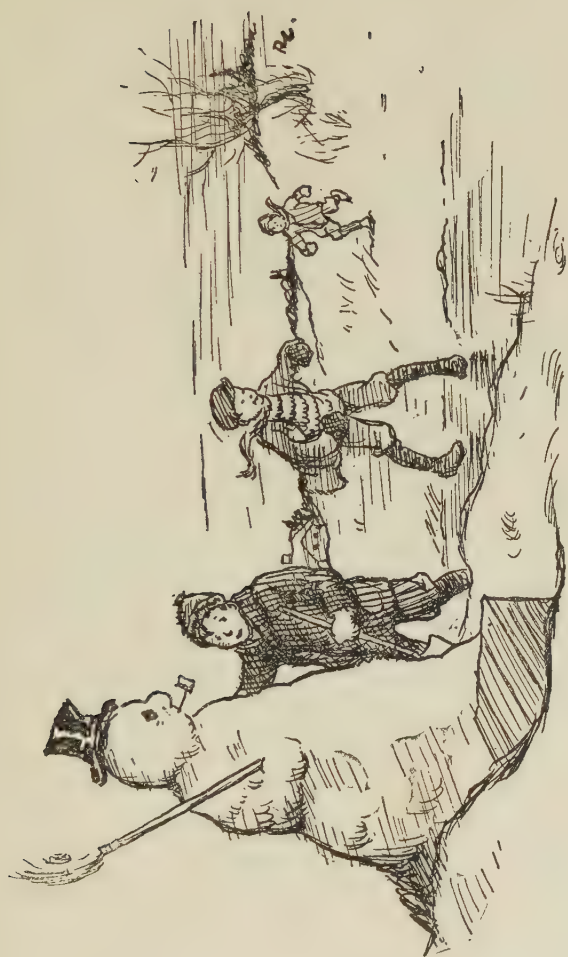
Where is the road to Slumberland?
Just rest your cheek upon your hand,
 And press your pillow hard, and say
 Good-night to all the world of Day;
Breathe deep—and, presto! you will stand
Upon the shores of Slumberland.

All sounds are songs in Slumberland—
The rhyme of waves upon the sand,
 The whisp'ring boughs, the droning breeze,
 And dreams are blossoming on the trees;
They only wait your gathering hand,
Wee visitor to Slumberland.

And all you meet in Slumberland
Obedient and expectant stand;
 The birds and beasts, the gnomes and elves,
 The sun and moon and stars themselves,
All wait to heed your least command,
While You are king in Slumberland.

IN WINTER TIME

The winter time is extra nice—
We run and slide upon the ice,
Or build a snow-man, fat and tall;
But coasting is the best of all.
The baby is so soft and plump
We put him first, in case we bump.



WHERE DREAMS ARE MADE

Dreams are made in the moon, my dear,
On her shining hillsides steep;
Pleasant and dreadful and gay and queer,
They're piled in a silver heap.
And many fairies with buzzing wings
Are busy with hammers and wheels and things,
Making the dreams that Night-time brings
To all little boys asleep.

And if a boy has been good till night,
When snug in his bed he lies
The fairies come with a moonbeam bright
And slide him up to the skies.
And there he sails as the Moon-king's guest,
And chooses the dreams he likes the best;
Then they slide him back to his nurs'ry nest
And leave him rubbing his eyes.

THE SPY

Yesterday mother she spanked me so hard,
I sort of keep feeling it now;
For somehow she learned, when I hid in the yard,
That I'd done what she didn't allow.
I asked how she knew that I'd gone and been bad,
And she said that a little bird told her I had.

It's always some bird that has tattled before,
And helped grown-up folks to find out;
And now when I've just shut the jam-closet door
I find *you* a-hopping about!
And if you're the bird that's been doing all that,
I'll find where you live, an' I'll tell my old cat.



PICTURE BOOKS

All the world is freshly tinted
For the eyes of each new child;
For his joy new sunbeams glinted,
Castle-clouds were reared and piled.
Nature, spreading arts unstinted,
Was rewarded when he smiled.

All the lore of all the ages,
Colors stolen from the skies,
Wrought by painters, poets, sages,
Have attained their richest prize
If on oft-read, thumb-worn pages
They delight the children's eyes.



THE TOY SOLDIERS

Sleep on, Little Boy, and sleep secure—
All day you have played so hard!
Your little feet that have romped and strayed,
Your head that has planned the games we played,
May rest, while we all keep guard.

Sleep on, Little Boy, your rest is sure—
What though we are battle-scarred;
The love you've lavished on us all day
Will more than do for a soldier's pay!
Sleep, then, for we all keep guard.

THE WEATHER MAN

Watchman, tell us of the day,—
Is it fit for noble deeds?
Does it call you to the fray?
Or the sort of morn that breeds
Poet-thoughts along the way?

Watchman, do you gaze upon
Skies of hope, or clouds of doubt?
Faint the answer came, anon—
“Mother says I can’t go out
’Less I put my rubbers on.”

THE PLAYMATE

I barked beneath his window, "Come and play!"
I scratched so lightly at his nursery door.
I whimpered softly in the passageway—
He never failed to answer me before.

I've saved the willow whip his fingers peeled;
The stick he used to throw is by the pool;
The butterflies are waiting in the field
Beside the grassy path that led to school.

It is so long since last we romped and ran.
How proud I was to guard his door of late!
I've called to him in every way I can.
There's nothing left to do but wait—and wait.



BABY JOHN

The lazy sun is yawning, as it hides behind the town,
For the Sleepy-Time is at hand;
And cozy beds are calling, as the sun goes creeping
down,
To each little boy in the land.
The organ-man is drowsy as he wanders down the
street;
The leaves are asleep on the tree;
And the horses and the wagons and the little dogs
you meet
Are as sleepy as they can be.

Your bed is calling to you, little John, Baby John!
There's a sleepy chair beside it to hang your clothes
upon.
And I hear the cool sheets saying, "What means this
long delaying?
It is time you stopped your playing, Baby John!"

The chairs are all so tired that to use them is a sin,
While the floor is asleep, no doubt,
And the carpets are the bedclothes that snugly tuck
it in—

You'll wake it if you run about!
I heard the cuckoo calling from the big clock in the
hall—

"Hurry up, little John!" it said;
And the little clock is ticking, half asleep against
the wall,

"Go to bed! Go to bed! Go to bed!"

*Your bed is calling to you, little John, Baby John!
There's a crinkley white pillow to rest your head
upon.*

*And the little dreams come creeping, I can see them
slyly peeping
To see if you are sleeping, Baby John.*



THE FIRST HAIR CUT

Jimmy's had a hair cut!
How the folks all stare.
It's so short you see his skin
Showing through his hair.
'T wasn't like he'd had before,
Cut around a bowl;
It was in that barber-store
By the candy pole.

Jimmy's had a hair cut!
We was there to see,
Peeking through the window-pane,—
All the boys and me.

THE FIRST HAIR CUT

He looked worried there alone,
Trying hard to grin,
On a kind of great big throne
Wrapped up to his chin.

Jimmy's had a hair cut!
'Course it scared him some.
All those shears and cups and things
Sort of struck him dumb.
My, I wished that I was him
Sitting there instead
Looking like a cherubim,
Showing just my head.

Wish I'd had my hair cut
By a shiney man,
Telling grown-up jokes and such
While his snippers ran.
Jimmy's mother saved a curl,—
She feels bad, I know,
That he wasn't born a girl
And could let them grow.

Jimmy's had a hair cut,—
My! It made him proud!
Walking out, while all of us
Followed in a crowd.

He got pretty rich that day
 'Fore he went to bed,
Making every fellow pay
 Just to smell his head.



GOIN' BAREFOOT

It's more fun goin' barefoot than anythin' I know.
There ain't another *single* thing that helps yer feel-
in's so.

Some days I stay in Muvver's room a-gettin' in her
way,

An' when I've bothered her so much she sez, "Oh
run and play,"

I say, "Kin I go barefoot?" En she sez, "If y'
choose;"

Nen I alwuz wanter holler when I'm pullin' off my
shoes!

It's fun a-goin' barefoot when yer playin' any game,
'Cause robbers would be noisy an' Indians awful
tame

Unless they had their shoes off when they crep' up in
th' night,

*An' folks can't know they're comin' till they get right
close in sight!*

An' I'm surely goin' barefoot every day when I get
old

An' haven't got a nurse to say I'll catch my detho-
cold!

An' if yer goin' barefoot yer want t' go outdoors—
Y' can't stretch out an' dig yer heels in stupid hard-
wood floors

Like you kin dig 'em in th' dirt. An' where th' long
grass grows

The blades feel kinder tickly an' cool between yer
toes.

So when I'm pullin' off my shoes I'm mighty 'fraid
I'll cough,

'Cause then I know Ma'd stop me 'fore I got my
stockin's off!

If y' often go 'round barefoot there's lots o' things
to know,

Of how t' curl yer feet on stones so they won't hurt
y' so,

An' when th' grass is stickly and pricks y' at a touch,
Jes' plunk your feet down solid an' it don't hurt half
so much.

I lose my hat mos' every day. I wish I did my
shoes—

Er else I wisht I was so poor I hadn't none t' lose!

COOKIN' THINGS

When my mother's cookin' things,
You bet I never wait
To put away my ball er gun,
I drop 'em where they are an' run
Fer fear I'll be too late.
The most excitin' kind of game,
Er toy, er story-book,
I let 'em go, an' never mind,
The very minute that I find
My mother's goin' to cook!

When my mother's cookin' things,
Then you just oughter smell
The spices an' the sweets an' such,
My mouth gets waterin' so much
I almost have to yell!
She opens up the oven door
Sometimes, to take a look,
An' then I jab 'em while they're hot,
To see if they are done er not,
When mother lets me cook.

When my mother's cookin' things,
P'r'aps it's pies to bake,
Er doughnuts bobbin' up an' down
In boilin' grease till they are brown,
Er p'r'aps it's johnny-cake.

COOKIN' THINGS

Whatever kind of thing it is,
I always like to hook
The biggest piece of dough I can
An' bake it in a patty-pan,
When me an' mother cook.

When my mother's cookin' things,
It pays you if you wait
An' eat 'em hot, right off the tin,
It's twice as good as anythin'
Could be, et off a plate!
An' I guess *you'd* find out fer sure
That I was not mistook
In any single thin' I've said,
If you could taste the gingerbread
I've helped my mother cook.



INTERRUPTING

They say it's wrong to interrupt when someone talks
to you,

But I don't do it near as much as grown-up people do;
For while I'm telling Mother some important piece
of news

She is counting up my buttons or examining my shoes.
And just when I have gotten to the most exciting part,
And she ought to pay attention to my words with all
her heart,

All at once she says, "Come here!

I very greatly fear

A button's coming off your clothes, and I must fix it,
dear."

It's just the same with Father,—he's no better, I'm
afraid.

I always want him to admire important things I've
made.

But when I start to show him, so that he will under-
stand

Where I nailed it or I sawed it, and just how I
worked and planned,

He'll nod his head, and say "Indeed!" in an attentive way,
And act as if he saw it, but then like as not he'll say,
Just when I've got a-going,
"My boy, your nose needs blowing;"
Which proves he doesn't hear, nor even look at what
I'm showing.



BEIN' SICK

When I am *really* sick abed
It isn't ever any fun.
I feel all achey in my head
An' hate to take my medisun.
Th' sheets get stickyish and hot,
But I am not allowed to kick
'Em off, er read, er talk a lot
When I am sick.

I hate fer all th' folks about
To come an' pat me on th' face
An' say, "Poor child, you'll soon be out,"
An' tiptoe all around th' place.
They go when I pertend to be
Asleep—I do it fer a trick:
I don't like folks to pity me
When I am sick.

My mother's diff'runt—I don't care
If she sits by me once er twice
An' says, "Poor boy," an' smooths my
hair;
She ain't just tryin' to be nice.
They bring warm squushy things to me
Fer meals, an' make me eat 'em quick.
I'm mis'ruble as I can be
When I am sick.

GETTIN' WELL

When yer really sick abed
All th' fun is getting well.
Say! It's jolly bein' fed—
I kin hardly ever tell
What tastes best. 'Most any food
Goes so fast I want'er lick
Th' plate. Stuff always tastes so good
When I've been sick.

I like it best when I can sit
All bundled in th' easy chair,
With all th' windows raised a bit
To give th' place a little air.
An' if a breeze comes now an' then,
I tell y' what, it's pretty slick
Just t' *smell* outdoors again
When I've been sick!

They put th' kittens on th' rug,
An' mother brings her sewin' in,
An' everythin's so nice an' snug
I sit an' look around an' grin.

An' then I get to countin' sneep,
Or wond'rin why th' clock should tick
In diff'runt ways. I like t' sleep
When I've been sick.



SOAP, THE OPPRESSOR

The folks at my house half the time are thinkin'
about dirt;

It sort of gives 'em horrors, an' they act as if it hurt.
The sight of just a little makes 'em daffy as can be—
They're always washin' sumthin', an' half the time
it's me.

It ain't because I wet my feet that gives me colds an'
such;

'Tain't runnin' round that keeps me thin—it's 'cause
I'm washed so much.

It does no good to tell 'em, they're so stubborn. But
I hope

That some day they'll discover what deceitful stuff is
soap.

I tell you, very often when my hands was clean and
white

I've gone along to wash 'em, 'cause it did no good to
fight.

When I've stuck 'em in the basin it was plain enough
to see

The soap would make the water as dirty as could be.

If folks would give me half a chance, with soap that
 didn't cheat,
I guess they'd be surprised to find I'm nachurally
 neat.
I'd take on flesh and leave off havin' colds an' such,
 I know,—
An' no one could complain about the parts of me that
 show.



BED-TIME

Last year my bed-time was at eight,
And every single night
I used to wish the clock would wait,
Or else stay out of sight.
It always seemed to me
The next half-hour'd be
The nicest time of all the day
If mother would agree.
But she always shook her head
And she sort of jumped, and said,
‘Why, it’s late—after eight—
And it’s time you were in bed!’

That clock would always do its best
To sit all quiet there,
Until I was my comfiest
In some big easy chair.

Then its striking would begin,
And I'd tell my Motherkin
How I'd just begun a chapter,
 And it was *so int'restin'*—
And the end was just ahead—
But she *usurully* said,
 "No; it's late—after eight—
And it's time to go to bed!"

And now my bed-time is ha-past,—
 But yet that old clock does
The same mean tricks—it's just as fast,
 Or faster, than it was.
Last night it seemed to me
The *next* half-hour 'd be
The nicest time of all the day
 If mother would agree.
But she smiled and shook her head,
And she kissed me while she said,
 "Why, it's late—ha-past eight—
And it's time you went to bed!"

SUPERSTISHUS

Onct I went a-fishin' with a man what had a reel
An' fancy hooks an' catgut an' a fish-pole made o'
steel;

He never got a single bite from early until late,
Just 'cuz he didn't take no stock in spittin' on th' bait.
Yes, he can laff an' jeer, *but where's his fish, I'd like
ter know?*

Oh, I guess lots o' things is true 'at some folks say
ain't so!

D'jever drop a horse-hair into th' wat'rin'-trough
An' leave it there fer weeks an' weeks 'thout drainin'
of it off?

An' ef you use a human hair they say it only takes
Jes' half as long—but anyhow, *it turns 'em into
snakes!*

An' ef a feller don't believe a half the things he hears
A darnin' needle comes along an' sews up both his
ears!

Our cook, she's *superstishus*—she's scared as anythin'
If someone spills a little salt er don't pick up a pin.

An' when I wuz a kid I'd walk down to th' gate an'
back,

An' think that I wuz poisoned if my foot stepped on
a crack!

I know *them* things is silly—I cross my heart I do—

But I guess lots o' things is so 'at some folks never
knew!

BABIES

A baby is so queer, you know,
I think, each new one that I see,
It isn't possible he'll grow
To be as fine a boy as me.



ILLOGICAL

They're as proud as they can be
Every time the baby squeaks;
When she gets as big as me
Bet they'll scold her if she speaks!

'Cause some visitor, perhaps,
When I try to say a word,
Laughs an' says that little chaps
Should be seen instead of heard.

If that's truly what they mean,
Seems to me it wasn't wise,
If they meant me to be seen,
Not to make me bigger size.

An' if I can't talk so much,
Why did God, who had his choice
Of materials an' such,
Make me have so big a voice?



THE BUTTERFLY

It's just a monstrous ant with paper wings.

I think I won't disturb it where it stands!

It never buzzes and it never sings.—

I wonder which is feet and which is hands?

I don't see what it's good for, anyway.

It never does a thing but stand and flutter;

I've followed it around for half the day

And haven't seen it make a bit of butter.

RAIN-CHARM

*Rain, rain, go away; come again another day,
Little Billie wants to play!*

What's the reason, do you s'pose, that it has to rain?
I've been flattenin' my nose up against th' pane
For about an hour or so, beggin' for th' rain to go.

In th' attic it's no fun 'thout th' other boys.
I get countin', one by one, every single noise,
An' the raindrops, when they strike, sound so kinder
solemn-like.

I jus' wait in this one place wishin' it would pass,
Watchin' all th' raindrops race down across th' glass;
See each big one, when it runs, gobble all th' little
ones.

*Rain, rain, go away—*wish you'd come at night.
Guess you knew I'd plans t'day, an' you came fer
spite.
Seems zif jus' th' days it pours I most want t' be out-
doors!

APPLE-PIE

When our cook she makes a pie
You oughter see her fingers fly!
 She sits an' holds a yeller bowl
 An' stirs so fast she keeps a hole
Down through the middle of the stuff;
There's milk an' egg, an' flour enough,
 And maybe other things, but I
 Ferget just all that makes a pie!

When our cook she makes a pie
She rolls the dough, that, by an' by,
 Is two round blankets; then you'll see
 Her slice some apples evenly.
Plump into bed she makes 'em hop,
An' cuts some peep-holes through the top
 So they won't smother when they lie
 All warm an' sugared in the pie.

When our cook she makes a pie
She balances the plate up high,
 And with a pleasant, snippy sound
 She trims it nicely all around.

And when she's thumb'd the edges tight,
The apples can't get up at night.
And when she's baked it, then, oh my!
You never et such apple-pie!



IN THE STUDY

Nicest place in all the house
Is my daddy's study chair;
Just as quiet as a mouse
I go creeping there,
An' he gives a little smile,
Writing, writing, all the while.

There's at least a million books
Up and down and round the wall.
I guess, from the way it looks,
I can't read them all!
If I did I'm sure I'd be
Just as wise and big as he.

KETCHIN' RIDES

I'm awful fond of ketchin' rides.

I like those trucks where I kin stand
Without a-holdin' to the sides
(Er maybe holdin' with one hand!),
Though teacher says it's not refined
To go a-ketchin' on behind.

I almost *never* walk to school,
So many wagons pass our place;
My fav'rite one he makes a rule
Of always leadin' me a chase,
An' then pertendin' he's too blind
To see me ketchin' on behind.

I've found there's just two kinds of men
What drives th' wagons in our town,
'Cause when I meet 'em, now an' then,
There's some that grab their whips er
frown,
But some they nod an' never mind
When I am ketchin' on behind.

Th' one that drives th' movin' van
Told me an' Brud he'd knock our skulls
Together—*he's th' kind of man*

That's mean to cats an' animuls.
But any man is good an' kind
Who *likes* yer ketchin' on behind.

I guess when I am rich an' great
An' own a truck an' grocery cart,
I'll always drive 'em slow, er wait
So little chaps kin get a start,
An' have 'em built so boys kin find
A place fer ketchin' on behind.

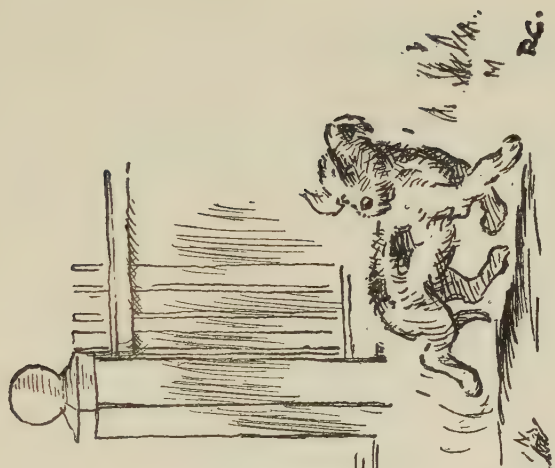


SYMPATHETIC

Whenever I start out to walk, our dog he seems to
know,
And runs along ahead of me to show he's coming
too;
And when there is a reason why he really mustn't go
The hollering "Go Home" to him is awful hard
to do.

He wags his tail and jumps around, and seems as if
he said,
"I guess you didn't mean it, you were only jokin'
then!"
But when he sees I'm serious he kinder droops his
head,
Or looks up at me sorrowful, an' looks away again.

And then at last he minds me if I keep an angry tone,
It's awful hard to do it, but I try with all my
might;
And sometimes when I look around I see him all
alone
A-watchin' me and watchin' me until I'm out of
sight.



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PC.

You see I know just how it is, 'cause some days when
I find

My brother's got to hurry off with bigger boys to
play,

And when he says I mustn't go and tag along behind,

He leaves me sittin' somewheres and a-feelin' just
that way!

IN THE MORNING

Reggalerly every day,
When my papa's gotten up,
I can see him far away
Mixin' sumpin' in a cup;
I can hear him slappy-slap
With a knife against a strap.

He is such a funny sight
In the mirror on the shelf,
With his face all blobby white,
Makin' faces at himself;
But I mustn't laugh, or he
Comes an' rubs it all on me!

Papa says when I'm growed up,
With some troubles an' a wife,
I can have a mixer-cup
An' a shiny crooked knife;
But he says I must begin
Puttin' pricklers in my chin.



'F I WAS ER HORSE!

'F I was er horse I'd hate t' wear
A collar what didn't fit,
An' blinder-things, an' I wouldn't care
To chew on a iron bit.
It ain't a way 'at I'd want'er live,
To just go everywhere I was driv.

'F I was er horse, I guess you'd see
I'd run away pretty quick!
I'd tear my harness an' wriggle free
An' go where th' grass was thick.
I'd kick my heels, an' I'd neigh fer joy,
But I ain't er horse, I'm er little boy!

SPECIAL WORDS

My mother she has special words
She's alwuz usin', but I find
The ones that I've most often heard
Is By-um-by and Never-mind.

Whenever I can't have my way
An' beg her "when?" and tease her
"why?"
The things she's likeliest to say
Is Never-mind and By-um-by.

An when our picnic stopped becuz
It rained, er sumpin' of the kind,
The only things she told us was
Jus' By-um-by an' Never-mind.

I as't when By-um-by would be,
She told me "Never-mind!" so I
Said "What is Never-mind?" an' she
Said I'd discover, By-um-by.

My mother she has special words
For question-answerin' an' such,
But I guess some that I have heard
Don't really mean so awful much.

AN IMAGINING

Two sisters that I never saw
Are lying underneath the ground.
Sometimes my mother takes me there
And says that I may play around.

But while she sits so quietly,
I often have imaginings,
And see a-flying near her head
Two little baby girls with wings.

MY SORE THUMB

I jabbed a jack-knife in my thumb—
Th' blood just *spurred* when it come!
The cook got faint, an' nurse she yelled
An' showed me how it should be held,
An' Gran'ma went to get a rag,
An' couldn't find one in th' bag;
An' all the rest was just struck *dumb*
To see my thumb!

Since I went an' jabbed my thumb
I go around a-lookin' glum,
And Aunt, she pats me on the head
An' gives me extra ginger-bread;
But brother's *mad*, an' says he'll go
An' take an' axe, an' chop his toe:
An' *then* he guesses I'll keep mum
About my *thumb*!

At school they as't to see my thumb,
But I just showed it to my chum,
An' any else that wants to see
Must divvy up their cake with me!

It's gettin' well so fast, I think
I'll fix it up with crimson ink,
An' that'll keep up *int'rest* some
In my poor thumb!



AT THE ZOO

I.

It must be hard for you, porcupine,
To dress when the day begins!
I'm glad there aren't any clothes of mine
A-needin' so many pins.

But when I've been saucy and horrid too,
Or up to some naughty prank,
If I could only wear clothes like you
I'd be awfully hard to spank!

II.

A snake's the funniest thing I know,
So dreadfully incomplete;
Without any arms where hands can grow,
And not any legs for feet.

But I wish I could crawl on the ground
that way,
Or shin up the apple trees,
And not have nursie get mad and say
There's holes in my stockin' knees!



III.

I'm glad I wasn't a monkey too!
It's jolly to watch you climb,
But you're fighting and biting the whole
day through,
And chattering all the time.

But maybe a tail like that would be
An awfully useful thing
Up in our neighbor's cherry tree
On holidays in the spring!

IV.

You thin giraffe, if I was you,
I'd have a hard time, I spec';
For nursie would make a great to-do
A-washing my face an' neck.

But when the jam and the cookie-jar
Are hid on the highest shelf,
I wisht I was as tall as you creatures are,
Instead of my tiny self.

MAKIN' THINGS

Whenever Christmas time comes round it really
doesn't take
Much money, 'cause the folks prefer the presents
that I *make*.
And so, for days and days before, I saw and pound
and glue,
A-making things and planning who's the best to give
'em to.
But sometimes I get thinking that I'd really like it
more
If folks would only use the things for what I make
'em for!



A RECOLLECTION

When we was visitin' a farm

I begged an' begged an' maybe squealed,
(I didn't see how it could harm)

To just run barefoot in a field.
Until at last the lady said
They'd better let me go ahead.

It was so stubbuly that each

Poor foot got hurtin' right away;
Still I was bound that I would reach

A haystack an' pertend to play.
But I just cried against the stack
For somebody to fetch me back.

My brother only stood an' laughed!

I might uv caught my death-o-cold
Away out there in all that draught,

'Cause I am only eight years old.
But sometimes seems zif older folks
'L laugh at things that isn't jokes.

THE FIRST VALENTINE

I'd like to write a valentine—
Not like the kind one sees about;
It mustn't have a single line
That folks could ever tease about.

It mustn't be all hearts and birds
And paper lace—the sissy kind;
I don't want any silly words—
The lovey, dovey, kissy kind.

But certainly it mustn't be
A cheap and common penny one,
And it must sort of make her see
I like her best of anyone!

COUGHS

They say little boys
Who are making a noise
Are doing just what you'd expect.
But I wish I could cough
Without starting folks off—
It has a most dreadful effect!

I can whistle and call,
I can whoop in the hall,
I can pound on a pan with a stone,—
And the folks might be nice;
But if I cough twice
Then nobody lets me alone.

I can say I'm a bear,
I can growl from a lair
Or make different sounds in my play,
But if air makes me choke,
Or I cough for a joke,
Why, no one believes what I say.

Yet everyone knows
That a tickle just grows
With maybe no reason but dust;

And times when you swallow
It sticks in some hollow,
And then you must cough or you bust.

Though I say what I choose,
They all feel of my shoes,
Or they tie an old scarf round my chin.
I must put on a coat,
Or they look down my throat,
And tell me I gotta come in.

So when grown-ups are there,
Why, I always take care,
If I'm feeling the start of a cough,
And I bury my face;
Or I hurry some place
Where it's safer to let it go off.

NURSES

There isn't anythin' that's worse
Than for a *boy* to have a nurse.
For even when she helps y' play,
She's alwuz gettin' in th' way;
There's so few things she understands,
She's just a bother on your hands.

I learned this, cuz a boy I know
Has one that never lets him go.
First time we met, I thought that such
A feller wasn't good for much.
He licked me, though, an' sat on top
Until his nurse she made him stop.

And afterwards, why him an' me
We're just as friendly as can be,
An' I am sure that nurse-girl is
His parents' fault instead of his.
They ought to know she just annoys,—
They're awful ignerunt of boys!



RUNNED AWAY

Dear Sis: I wrote this noat to say Ive ben an gone an runned away; I gess the fambily Ive got wunt miss me such a nawful lot, cuz yesterday you no I had a nawful wollupin from dad an nurse she scolded me like fun fer sumpthin some one else had dun. Last night ma sent me off to bed before Id got a chapter read. It shows, so fur as I kin see, that no one cares a rap fer me. I gess that I aint understood and so Ive run away fer good. But sis if there is pie to-day fer dinner, snake a piece away, and bring it to me when your able, youll find me hiding in the stable.

GETTIN' WASHED

At breakfast, when I'm kinder late an' hurry to my
place,

An' wanter eat, some person says, "Oh, what a dirty
face!"

Or, "Leave the table right away, those hands are a
disgrace!"

When I come back all nice an' clean my mother says
she fears

I didn't take a lot of pains to wash behin' my ears.

An' lots o' times when I've been out an' haven't
touched a thin'

That could have dirtied me a *bit*, why someone's
called me in—

'Cause what they went an' said was dirt was shad-
ders on my skin.

But s'pose that cedar tree I climbed did leave some
teeny smears,

I don't see how a bit could get 'way up behin' my
ears!

Oh, when I'm big, without a nurse or grown-up folks
that tease,

Some weeks I'll wear my oldest clo'es as dirty as I
please,

'An' muss my hair an' have big holes in both my
stockin' knees.

Of course I'll wash each *mornin'*, 'cept when play-
time interferes,

But *you just bet* I'll let alone that place behin' my
ears!

THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT

I never care when my feet are wet,
 Though grown-ups worry so;
I never trouble how cold I get,
 I'm tougher 'n people know.
And the coldest kind of a day just suits,—
But I hate when snow gets into my boots.

I like it often to storm and blow,
 And not every day be fair.
I run and jump in the deepest snow:
 When a snowball hits me square
I ain't the kind that hollers and scoots,—
But I hate when snow gets into my boots.

I'd never button my coat at all
 If people would let me be.
I ain't afraid when I slip and fall
 In snowdrifts up to my knee.

148 THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT

And the drifts in front of our houses are
beauts!—

But I hate when snow gets into my boots.



WHEN DADDY SINGS

When Daddy sings he keeps his chin
Pressed tight against his chest,
And just before the folks begin
He gives his voice a test,
And growls "Do, do" first high, then low,
To see which way sounds best.

When Daddy sings it makes him frown
Or wrinkle up his nose.
He waves one finger up and down
The way the music goes;
And when the song lasts very long,
He rises on his toes.

"Black Joe" and "Cradle of the Deep"—
He growls them extra strong.
I don't know why he cares a heap
To see what words belong.
He just sings "Tum ti iddy um"
In every single song.

PIRATE'S CAVE

Under the table, when dinner's through,
There is my fav'rite cave.
My sister she is a pirate crew,
An' I am a captain brave.
With treasure out of the cookie jar,
And plunder from other lands,
To the pirate lair that's hidden there
We creep on our knees and hands.

Before the people get up to go,
Then is the time to hide.
I whisper, "Ho, my lads, lie low,
There are foes on every side!"
And then I thump on the table top,
And Papa says, "Hey! What's that?"
And another thump makes Mother jump
And guess that it's just the cat.

But Papa says, when I thump again,
"P'r'aps it's a pirate bold!"
And his legs an' feet come huntin' then,
A-tryin' to catch a-hold;
He keeps me hurryin' back an' forth
Till his hands come huntin' too,
Then I sink the ship when I feel his grip,
And Mother she gets the crew!



DAYTIME NAPS

My mother thinks that little chaps
Who play a lot need daytime naps;
Though I've explained, with all my might,
That I can't sleep except at night.

But sometimes, when I've played a lot,
I'd jus' as liv go in as not;
It gives her quite a nice surprise
When I lie down and shut my eyes.

I couldn't get to sleep, I know;
But for a little while or so
I get to seeing on the wall
Queer pictures that aren't there at all.

One time a camel stuck his head
Right close up to me on the bed,
And animals I'd seen that day
Up at the Zoo, they came to play.

And once I thought of curious things
That I could do if I had wings.
But all the nicest parts of it
I can't remember now a bit!

I think so hard of things I'd do,
I feel all stretchy when I'm through,
And then I look and find it's been
More'n a hour since I came in.

It's nice to lie and think, perhaps;
But just the same I can't take naps!
(And mother says she sees it's true,
But thanks me just for tryin' to.)

TOP-TIME

I wisht I knew what makes the top-time come
Before it's gotten over bein' cold;
Sometimes my fingers get so kinder numb
The string can't help from comin' all
unrolled.

I like a top-string better when it's old,
An' then I tell yer, I can make 'er hum!
I've learnt a special secret way t' hold,
By pressin', when I throw 'er, with my
thumb.

You know that stubby yellor one I had?—
It split ten other tops, er maybe more—
I broke it, an' I tell yer, I felt bad!
But now she's mended better 'an before.
I don't see why our cook should get so mad
Each time I spin 'er on the kitchen floor.



KITE-TIME

Last night me an' my brother made a kite—

The biggest one we've ever tried to do.

Stood up on end 'twas more'n twice my height

(The kind that has three sticks instead of two).

I made the tail, an' 'fore I'd gotten through

I'd used up every rag there was in sight.

To fly her 'd take a whoppin' wind, we knew,
And then to-day it came exactly right.

A boughten kite may have a neater look,

But home-made ones are mighty hard to beat.

This big one nearly dived us off our feet—

'Twas in the length of tail we were mistook;

An' you can see her, any time you look,

A-hangin' in that elm tree down the street.



BALL-TIME

This week it's got so warm that I have been
Without my overcoat for every day.

I wisht I hadn't promised to stay in
An' study for an hour, instead of play.

'Cause with the window up a little way
I smell the grass and see the buds begin.

Our clock's a lot behind time, I should say,
An' studyin' too hard'll make me thin!
I hear the boys outside begin to call—

They want me for a game of two-old-cat.
I guess they know I've got a brand new
ball;—

It isn't me they want so much as that.
I bet you they can't borrow it at all

Unless I get first innin's at the bat!



SWIMMIN'-TIME

It was so hot in school I sat an' sweat,
An' thought all day how fine a swim would feel.
When time was up we didn't wait, you bet,
But just raced out here an' began to *peel*!
It's fun to hear the little fellers squeal
Each time you shove 'em in an' get 'em wet.
Once I was skeered when some big boy would
steal
Close up behind—it kinder skeers me yet!
But anyhow I can stay under more
Than any boy my size—I do it lots.
It's funny—an' I've noticed it before—
Down deep the water's warm an' cold in spots.
Hi! Hi, there! See those fellers up on shore—
They're tyin' all our stockin's into knots!

NUTTIN'-TIME

I know where butternut an' shag-bark trees

Grow thick,—an' chestnuts an' sweet-acorns too.

Each fall we go there an' pick all we please—

We take our lunch an' stay the whole day
through.

Last week we went to where the walnuts grew,
With two big sacks an' filled 'em at our ease.

I shinned one tree—that's what I love to do!—
And then we hunted, on our hands an' knees.

But after all, the part I like the best

Is when the sacks have gotten pretty fat,
An' some one says it's time we ought to rest

An' start the jam an' cookies an' all that.

This time it kind of spoiled my interest

To find a chestnut burr just where I sat.

SNOWBALL-TIME

When the snow first comes, so fine an' thin,
It's good for snow ice-cream; an' by-an'-by
Some evenin' we will fill a heapin' tin,
And drip hot syrup in—oh me, oh my!
Until this week the snow has been too dry,
But now it packs, and snow fights will begin.
We've built a block-house with a roof so high
We only stoop a little when we're in!
I've got some boots that come above my knees—
Last winter, too, they were my *special pride*;
I plunge through any snow-drifts that I please,
Or climb on top of 'em an' sit an' slide.
But Jimminy! my toes begins to freeze
If ever any snow gets down inside.



THE SCAPEGOAT

I'm the only one she caught;
It was Willie cracked her winders,
It was Jimmy stole the vase
Off the gate-post at her place,
Freddy broke it all to flinders.
It was Dick and Bud that fought,
It was Sammy Jones that sassed her.
There was nothin' I had done,
I was actin' as I ought,
But we all began to run—
And the rest of 'em ran faster,
I'm the only one she caught.

I'm the only one she caught;
Wisht I was a faster runner.
Now she says she'll make of me
An example, so that we
Won't repeat the harm we done her,—
Says it's time that we was taught.
Guess they'll wish they'd seen me through it,
Cause they know, though I can't run
Quite as fast as p'raps I ought,
I can lick 'em, one by one!
I bet, next time, they'll see to it
It ain't only me that's caught.

THE WIND

The wind it rushes in and out
An' makes a great to-do,
An' little leaves leap all about
To tell you where it blew.

Whenever it goes racing by
It pulls my clothes and hair;
Some places it will sing or sigh,
But no one sees it there!

The trees are p'raps the only thing
That *see* it as it blows,
For they all lean, an' point, an' sing
In whispers, "There it goes!"



PRAYER FOR A LITTLE BOY

*Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take.
And this I ask for Jesus' sake.*

But while I live I want to be from quick and angry
passions free,

With gentle thoughts, and happy face, and pleasant
words in every place.

I pray, whatever wrong I do, I'll never say what is
not true;

Be willing at my task each day, and always honest in
my play.

Make me unselfish with my joys, and generous to
other boys;

And kind and helpful to the old, and prompt to do
what I am told.

Bless every one I love, and teach me how to help
and comfort each.

Give me the strength right-living brings, and make
me good in little things.—Amen.



THE CAGED COCKATOO

"Perhaps," the little maiden said,
"A lovely Princess would not wed
Some Genii of high degree,
And now she's prisoned in a bird
Until we learn the magic word,
And burn her plumes, and set her free."

"Of course," said he, "that may be true,—
But p'raps it's just a cockatoo
From far-off Africa or Spain;
But maybe, on its ocean trip
It travelled in a pirate-ship
Where gold was hid and men were slain!"

THINGS THAT GET LOST

They tell me, when I lose a thing,
No one's at fault but me;
It's just because I'm carelesser
'N what I ought to be.
But there are happenin's that show
It isn't true a bit—
'Cause when a thing gets lost, I know
It's part the fault of *it*.

'Cause often when I'm in the house
For just a little while,
I put my cap an' ball an' such
All in a little pile.
Then when I'm in a rush to go,
And hurry right to where
I left 'em, it's most always so
That *one* of 'em's not there!

And while we hunt with all our might,
The thing we're looking for
Is hid, I'm sure, just out of sight
An' laughin' more an' more.
'Cause it can hear us goin' wrong
An' sayin', "*Where d' you s'pose*
That old thing is?" An' all along
It's happy, 'cause IT knows!



VACATION IN THE COUNTRY

If I lived in the country *every* day
Instead of only when vacations come,
Would I get sunburned so that it would stay,
And say words like "I reckon" and "to
hum"?

Could I wear one suspender if I chose,
And learn an awful lot of useful things,
Like how to pick up pebbles with my toes,
Or tell a bird from just the way it sings?

And would I know the places where to dive,
And all the quickest cuts across the lots?

And could I keep some snakes and frogs
 alive,
And would my feet get hard, with callus
 spots?

Back home there in the city, there's no way
 To learn such useful things; so I've a mind,
Before the folks all start to go away,
 To find some place to hide, and stay
 behind.

BUILDIN' FIRES

To build a fire is better fun
Than almost anythin' I know.
There's certain ways it should be done,
Or else it's likely not to go.
My father says that he admires
A boy that's good at buildin' fires.
An' in the diff'runt ones I've tried,
There's lots of little thin's I've learnt,
Like lightin' from the windward side,
An' how to bank 'er when she's burnt.
An' how to make the smudges thick,
An' when to poke 'er with a stick.
On Saturdays we love to go
And do like tramps or Indians do,
An' cook an ear of corn or so,
With frogs' legs, or some fishes too.
(The nicest food that's ever cooked
Is veg'tables that you have hooked.)
A fire at home is not the same;
You have to get a chair an' sit
And watch a kind of *gentle* flame
With no excitement over it.
An' grown-up folks, instead of you,
Do all the pokin' there's to do.



REJECTED

There's a nawful pretty teacher at our school, an'
once I told her

That I thought we might be married if she'd wait till
I was older;

There was no one 'cept my mother that I liked so
well, I said.

She didn't even answer, but she laughed at me in-
stead.

She's forgotten all about it, an' it seems to me a pity
That folks what are so cruel should be made so
awful pretty.

But I guess I'll make her sorry that she treated me
so hard,

If I do what I've been plannin', an' I die in her front
yard.

OUR GANG

With affectionate apologies

We've got a gang, and I belong,
It's active all the year around;
We've got a drum-corps, twenty strong,
A secret club and camping ground.
And then of course we have a yell
That we can whistle low or hum,
And when I hear it, I can tell
A fellow's calling me to come.
Wherever it might be,
I'd answer instantly,
For I would know 'twas Dop or Al
Or Jinks or Don or Rob or Hal
Or all of 'em but me.

To-day I heard my mother say
How very greatly she enjoys
A-seeing with me in my play
So nice a lot of little boys.
But when I told 'em so, they guessed
That maybe she would not admire
Us all so much, if I confessed
That we had set some woods afire!

It's really true, and we
Were sure as we could be
That men were after Dop and Lest
And Jinks and Buster and the rest
And Don and Rob and me.

But later, in our rondevoo—
A very special secret one—
We talked about a deed or two
Of mischief we had lately done
And then and there we all agreed
We none of us were scared a bit!
We planned another direful deed,
We were so bold and desperit.
We named us the M.D.
And swore to secrecy;
The members we agreed upon
Was Al an' Dop an' Jinks an' Don
An' sev'ral more, an' me.

If you've no gang you call your own,
You're someone to be sorry for.
You can't do direful deeds alone,
And keep the oaths that you have sworn.
I know some secrets dark and dread
About us fellows, every one—
But I won't tell, alive or dead,
The awful deeds I know they done.

And though I get to be
A grown-up man, you'll see
I'll never tell on Dop or Al
Or Jinks or Don or Rob or Hal
Or all the rest, or me!

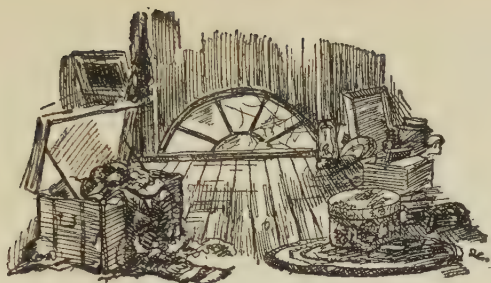


SEWIN' BUTTONS ON

Every time my mother sews
Some kind of button on my clo'es,
It always gives me a surprise
To see how fast the needle flies.
In buttons all the difference is,
 They have four little holes or two;
But just whichever hole she says,
 She makes her needle-point come through!
She never seems to aim,
But it's always just the same—
It's as int'restin' to watch her as 'most any sort
 of game.

But when I start to sewin' one,
Why, just as soon as I've begun,
The thread gets tangled as can be,
Or keeps a-gettin' caught on me.
An' after all the time it takes
 To get the needle goin' some,
It hits the button hard, an' breaks,
 Or comes one side an' pricks my thumb.
But anybody knows
That troubles such as those
My mother never seems to have, no matter
 what she sews!

'An' so I think, when I have grown,
And got a house that's all my own,
An' wife an' family an' such,
If I lose off my buttons much
I'll have my mother always there
To sew 'em on for me again;
Unless she thought she wouldn't care
To be so very busy then,
Or somethin' else occurred
That she thought that she preferred—
But she says it is the nicest plan she ever,
ever heard!



DRESSIN' UP

It's fun up in the attic, when mother lets us 'splore
In all the trunks an' boxes there an' litter up the floor—
She tells us we may try things on if we won't get 'em
tore.

An' sometimes we play grown-up folks in big ol'-
fashioned clo'es;

Or sometimes dress up fancy ways an' play we're
givin' shows,

An' charge ten pins admission, an' all the fam'bly goes.

But when we find ol' things of mine we rig'em up on sis,
An' p'rade around, an' daddy says, "Whose little
chap is this?"

An' mother says, "Dear little boy!" an' asks her for
a kiss.

But when me an' my sister put her skirts an' stuff on me,
I notice no one seems to think 'at it's a girl they see;
But the women say "My Gracious!" an' the men folks
say "Oh Gee!"

“HEAR MY DOLLIES’ PRAYER”

O Lord, I pray Thee, hear my dollies’ prayer,
And teach them how to ask for what is right;
But if it’s going to give You extra care,
Then You might skip *my* blessings for to-night.
Please make them all more loving and polite;
I pray Thee not to let their covers tear,
But keep their sawdust stuffings out of sight,
And please help Anne to grow a head of hair.

I wish poor Bella’s knees were made to bend,
I truly am as sorry as can be.
I hope that You won’t mind, and that You’ll send
The blessings that each dolly asks of Thee.
And, Lord, I pray that You will just pretend
This is my dollies talking, ’stead of me.



ANTHROPOLOGY

I love my *ordernery* dolls the best
Of any kind that ever could be bought.
No foreign doll that Santy ever brought
Is near so nice, no matter how she's dressed.
I hope my Chinese doll has never guessed
That I don't love him half of what I *ought!*
I take good care to see that he is taught
His lessons oftener than all the rest.

I wish the Dolly-maker would begin
To mend his ways; I would if I was he!
'Cause if the dolls that have a yellow skin
Are heathenish inside as they can be,
Just think how *sensibuller* he'd have been
To make 'em all Americans like me.

THE MISSIONARY'S DAUGHTER

I haven't sewed my children's clo'se
For days, the way I'd like to do;
I don't neglect 'em, goodness knows,
'Cept when it is my duty to;
They're less important, anyhow,
'Cause I'm a missionary now.

My heathen doll's not half so dear
As all my Christian children there,
And that's what makes my duty clear
To always give him speshul care;
'Cause I have found it wrong to do
The things I'm always wanting to.



MENDING DAY

How quickly children's clothes will rip and tear!

Each time I put off mending till so late,

I re'lize that a family of eight

Can give a loving mother lots of care.

If more get born I really do declare

I'll put 'em into bed and make 'em wait.

My brother hopes to learn to *operate*,

But there is not a child that I would spare.

He's borrowed three that he pertends are dead.

But I won't even think of such a thin'!

And yet at mending time I've often said

I almost wished—though p'raps it is a sin—

That God had sent *some* paper dolls instead

Whose clothes are only painted on their skin.

AT THE AQUARIUM

Fishes swimming in and out
Till my eyes grow dizzy,
What's the task that you're about,
Keeping you so busy?

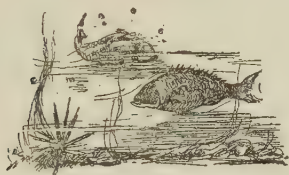
Are you meant, as people say,
Just to throw a hook at,—
Or be brought from far away,
For us all to look at?

Dogs and horses know my words,
Cats are warm and homey;
Cows and mice and even birds
Sometimes get to know me.

Yet you stare with not a wink,
Seeming not to see me.
Are there thoughts we both can think,—
Something strange and dreamy?

I may puzzle you as much!
And I wonder whether,
When I see your noses touch,
You all talk together.

There's another world, it seems,
That you drift and dart in,
Full of ways and deeds and dreams
I can have no part in.



THE ASSISTANT

I've learnt to sift the flour in, and the way it ought
to mix,
And I know that more is needed if the stuff is soft
and sticks.
I'm not just sure of *all* the things you need for mak-
ing dough,
But that's the sort of kind of thing a man don't have
to know.
Cook says I'm such a help to her that every day she
wishes
I could be there advising her and licking off the
dishes.

UNREST

The motorman bangs on his noisy gong
And grins at folks as he whoops along,
Or stops up quick to jerk us:
Wish 't I was him! But I'd like it more
As a druggist-clerk in a city store,
A-mixing soda and fizz and pop,—
Or I'd be the help in a candy shop,
Or one of the boys to mind the bell,
In a uniform in a big hotel
If it didn't over-work us!
Or I'd be a tramp, 'cause his folks don't care
If he's washed his face or has brushed his hair;
Or else be a missionary, so
That I could get foreign stamps, you know:
But best of all I would like to go
And be a clown at a circus.
There's other things I might like to be—
I know I'm tired of being Me!



DANDELION

Dandelion, Fuzzy-top, must I stop my play?
Do you s'pose my mother thinks I'm too long away?
I had planned a lot of things I must do to-day.
I was chasing butterflies when you made me stop.
People say you are so wise, Fairy Fuzzy-top!

Dandelion, Fuzzy-top, won't you tell me true?
Must I hurry home again, 'fore my play is through?
Seems as if I had about a million things to do!
Sunny days are all so short,—and that is why, you
 see,
I've really got to know at once if mother's wanting
 me.

HANGING THE STOCKINGS

Christmas eve! It's Christmas eve!
Supper's cleared away,—
Seems as if I can't believe
That to-day's to-day!
—I don't see a thing, do you,
We can hang a stockin' to?

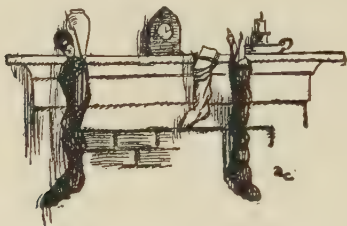
For a month or just about,
Days would hardly stir,
Though I crossed their places out
On the calendar.
—Pins or nails'll never stick
In this hard old chimney brick.

P'raps as soon as night's begun
He'll come stealing in!
My! It makes the shivers run
Up and down my skin.
—Mayn't I pound a nail up here
In the woorwork, Mother dear?

Daddy's sock'll never do,—
Not a toy would fit.

188 HANGING THE STOCKINGS

S'pose we let him stand his shoe
 Just in under it?
—There! They're done. I'm sleepy, some.
Bet to-morrow'll never come!



EVENINGS

On cold, dark winter evenings,
 outdoors a wind storm sings;
You hear a window rattle
 and a dead limb creaks and swings,
And grown-ups sit around the fire
 and talk of diff'runt things.
But I just fool around and grin,
 it feels so nice and snug,
Till pretty soon I go and get
 my favorite book, and lug
It near the fire, and stretch out
 on my stomach on the rug.
Then by and by my mother
 raps her thimble on my head
And says, "Why, boy, it's getting late!
 Come, run along to bed."

Evenings in the summer,
 when it's just as light as day,
With chirpy noises in the trees,
 and sounds from far away,
And a sort of warm and grassy smell
 that makes you want to play;

Why, then the boys come chasing round
and whistle at the gate,
And I slip off before I'm seen,
or mother hollers "Wait!
Go get your hat, and promise you'll
be back before it's late!"
Those summer nights it's father who
gets after me instead,
And calls me through the darkness,
"Boy! Skip right along to bed."

I think the morning's pretty long,
especially in school;
And afternoon has time enough
to suit me, as a rule;
But evenings they are always short,
in winter, spring, or fall,
And every time of year I like
the evenings best of all.



ECONOMISIN'

Dad was tickled when I went
Once and whispered in his ear
That I wouldn't spend a cent
Buyin' him a gift this year.
I would build a fine surprise
All myself, and '*conomise*.

So I went and bought a saw—
Not a toy, but good and strong,—
And a hammer with a claw
For the nails I hammer wrong.
I am sure he'll like this more
Than a present from a store.

Then Dad bought some fancy wood
When I asked him, though I'm sure
If he's 'quisitive he could
Guess I'm makin' furniture.
If he does, I needn't care,
For he'll never guess a *chair*!

And I went and bought a bitt—
Makes holes any size I choose:
Lots of fixin's come with it
That I'm learnin' how to use.

P'raps for Christmas time, next year,
I could make a chiffonier.

'T won't be long before it's done,
Now I've boughten tools enough;
Buyin' cushions will be fun,
And some paint and varnish stuff.
He'll be deeply touched, I know,
At my 'conomisin' so.

AFTER SCHOOL

It's strange to think how much may come from just
a little thing;

Just as they tell you mighty oaks from little acorns
spring.

My Grandpa says a kettle once boiled up a bit too
free

And if it hadn't, so he says, there'd not be any Me!
'Then Grandma lays her knitting down, and says in
tones severe,

"Don't talk such nonsense to that child,—his bed-
time's very near."

"Why, I remember," Grandpa says, "as if 't was
yesterday,

That kettle setting on the stove and bubbling away,
While twenty pairs of youngsters' eyes would watch
it dance and hum,

Instead of conning alphabets or figgering a sum.

"Then suddenly I recollect that kettle lid went pop!
And water ran all down the stove as if 't would never
stop;

And two young people laughed out loud, which was
against the rule,
And so the master chided 'em and kept 'em after
school.

"Now one of those young laughers was a very shy
young lad,
And 't other was a little girl,—the prettiest they had.
Hey, Grandma! 'Member how the boys all waited
on the fence?"
"I didn't hear you," Grandma says. "Why don't
you talk some sense?"

"Ah me," says Grandpa, "there they sat about an
hour or more,
While that young lad scraped courage up he'd never
had before,—
And wrote it down in billy-dous,—he must have writ-
ten reams,—
While Master polished up the stove and maybe
dreamed *his* dreams.

"Ah me, that little school is gone," says Grandpa,
sighing hard;
"The woodland path they used to tread is now a
boulevard.
'T was close to ninety years ago." Cries Grandma,
"Sakes alive,
You ought to really be ashamed, 't was only sixty-
five!"



“Ah well,” says Grandpa, “those two chicks walked
hand in hand that day,
It grew to sech a habit that they couldn’t break away.
And then she married him. Just why, I’ve often
wondered sence,
With all the other boys in town a-waiting on the
fence.
I guess she mightn’t, if she’d known he wasn’t very
rich!”
And Grandma says, “Oh, go to bed,—I’ve dropped
another stitch!”

A NEWSBOY'S PLAINT

Some fren's o' mine is tryin' hard ter put me on de
queer—

De doctor wat dey sent's a nervey bloke;
Says 'e, "Yer need de country—I ferbid yer stayin'
'ere!"

I tell yer straight, I t'ought it was a joke.
Dere ain't no finer paper-route from Bronx ter
Chat'am Square—

'Taint like I was a cully shinin' shoes!
Who's he wid his 'forbiddin'? Now gwan an' quit
yer kiddin'—

Aw, cheese it! 'Ere's a cove dat wants de news!
Pa—a—peh!

Woil' an' de Joinal! Times an' de Sun!

Press or de Heral'! Hi—Wich one?

Mo—o—nin' pa—a—peh! Loidy, 'ere y' uh,

A—a—ll a—bout de moider—Buy a papeh, Suh?

Dere's trees an' grass a-growin' in mos' all de city
parks,

De same as in de country, so dey say;
Y' hear about de crowin' of de roosters an' de
larks—

I'd jus' as liv get woke some udder way!



Me fren' wot runs de book-store, he lets me monkey
round,

An' I see dem country t'ings in picter-books—
An' I've frequent seen a chicken dat de butcher-boy
was pickin',

An' dere's often cows a-hangin' up on hooks.

Pa—a—peh!

Woil' an' de Joinal! Times an' de Sun!

Press or de Heral'! Hi—Wich one?

Mo—o—nin' pa—a—peh! Loidy, 'ere y' uh,

A—a—ll a—bout de moider—Buy a papeh, Suh?

I need de country air, 'e says: Aw rats, dat ain't
a mark

Ter wat I'd need up dere widout de boys!

Dey say dere ain't no 'lectric lights—at night de
place is dark—

Dere ain't no cops—An' *say!* Dere ain't no *noise!*
Says 'e, "I wouldn't give *so* much fer wat yer life is
wort'!"

Fergit it! I ain't askin' 'im ter give.

Who wants ter stay a-stewin' in a place where not-
tin's doin'?—

I want ter do some livin' wile I live.

Pa—a—peh!

Woil' an' de Joinal! Times an' de Sun!

Press or de Heral'—Hi—Wich one?

Mo—o—nin' pa—a—peh! Loidy, 'ere y' uh,

A—a—ll a—bout de moider—Buy a papeh, Suh?

AMBROSIA

I have sipped and supped and tasted
Of the food a poet sings;
Rare exotic fauna, basted
By some chef, the peer of kings.
Cloyed, I've thrown aside or wasted
Nectar and ambrosial things.

Though I sit amid the gleam of
Damask, broadcloth, shimmering silk,—
Crystal bowls that hold the cream of
Nature's stores of every ilk;
Oft in yearning mood I dream of
Boyhood's bowl of bread-and-milk!



SCEPTICS

When your old dad was as little as you

Was he likely to do

What they wanted him to?

Why, certainly so! And as quick as a wink

He did as they bid him before you could think.

Hey! Hey?

What do you say?

What makes you keep winking and grinning that
way?

Your uncle's been "tellin' you sumthin' "? Dear,
dear!

You mustn't believe all the stories you hear.

When dad and his playmates were nice little boys

The first of their joys

Was giving their toys

To poor little children who needed them more;

Your dad was so good he gave all of his store.

Hey! Hey?

What do you say?

Your mother has some of 'em now, put away?

Such nerve was unknown in my day!—I'll be bound

You imps have been snooping and prying around.

When daddy was young he was deaf, dumb, and
blind

To pranks unrefined;

He'd a serious mind.

He paid no attention to girls and their looks,
But gave all his time to his tasks and his books.

Hey! Hey?

What do you say?

Yes, mother was raised in the very same way.

You found an old letter and read it?—My Scat!

We used to spank children for mischief like that.

THOSE WILFUL TOYS

My house is quite full of such curious things.
There are blocks that have feet, there are books that
 have wings;
And dolls that can walk, and two old Teddy-bears
With legs that can carry them up and down stairs.
 And Polly's not sure, and Jimmy can't say
 Just how they were made in this curious way.

We stand each book nicely away on the shelf,
But somehow it seems to get down by itself.
And toys that we put every day in their place
All scamper about till they're quite a disgrace.
 And Polly can't say, and Jimmy don't know
 Just why we should find them wherever we go.

This morning I called, in a voice loud and clear,
So even the toys in the attic could hear,
"If you're all in your places at bedtime, I might
Bring home something good in my pockets to-night."
 And Polly don't know, and Jimmy can't say,
 But they *think* that the toys are quite sure to obey.

ACCOUNTING OF STOCK

Come here, little girl, come here!

Your daddy has serious fears
That no one took care, when combing your
hair,

To see what became of your ears.
Why, bless me! I shouldn't have said
There was one on each side of your head!
But p'raps it is done that way, for the fun
Of hearing two secrets as easy as one!

Come here, little girl, come here!

Your daddy is anxious to see
If that nose is in place on your dear little face
Just where it's intended to be.
Dear, dear, it's too round at the end!
But that'll be easy to mend,—

A little girl's nose grows just where it grows
So it'll be easy to pinch, I suppose.

Come here, little girl, come here!

Your daddy with trouble is tossed.
It's ages since he has counted to see
That none of your toes have been lost.

Thank goodness! there's ten of 'em here,—
There was no occasion for fear.

But everyone knows a little girl's toes
Should *all* hurry with her wherever she goes.

Come here, little girl, come here!

And cure your poor daddy's alarms.
He really can't say, from so far away,
If you've got the right number of arms.
What! No more than two? Is that right?
They ought to be fastened in tight.

But two isn't bad,—and I'm specially glad
They're so well adjusted for hugging your
dad!



A TOAST

Toast a tyrant band,—*skoe!* in sacred chorus!
Slaves to our command,—czars who trample o'er us.
Devotees of wrath; source of half our troubles;
In whose cyclone path cost of living doubles.
Harmless as the doves; butts of fierce invective;
Life's true spice, and love's unconfessed objective.
Gods of our best selves, bidding us confess 'em;
Fairyland's true elves,—To Our Kids, God Bless
'Em!

AMBUSHED

Peace and safety seem to dwell

Where my garden grows;

I've no moat nor citadel

Where I find repose.

Yet I dread the sudden yell

Of some lurking eager foes!

Silence bids me feel secure,

As I wander out.

Weeds and worms and bugs obscure

Are the foes I rout.

Yet a premonition sure

Warns that redskins are about!

Hark! a hoot-owl—'t is the cry

Indians used of yore.

Stealthy footfalls, creeping nigh,

Thrill me to the core.

Late! Too late! They've scurried by,

Gaining first my open door.

Savage redskins, bent on loot,

Start with gingerbread;

Victors now beyond dispute,

They will scalp me dead.

Indians, if you really shoot,

You'll be spanked and sent to bed.

THE POOH-POOH BIRD

You've often heard
The Pooh-Pooh Bird,—
Don't hesitate to take my word!
Yet like myself you've never seen it,
For human gaze would but demean it.

To hide from sight
Is its delight,
And so it mostly flies by night,
And all its life its chief of joys is
To frighten folks with spooky noises.

When lamps are lit,
And lone you sit
A-watching firelight shadows flit,
Some creaky sound will set you squirming,
Whose whereabouts you can't determine.

'T is thieves perhaps—those furtive taps!
Hark—there again! Your courage saps;
'T is now upstairs, and now the basement,
And now outside against the casement.

But take my word,
Those sounds you heard
Are nothing but the Pooh-Pooh Bird,
Who flits for fun 'round silent houses,
And some lone watcher's fear arouses.

If you would fright
This bird to flight,
Just cry "Pooh Pooh!" with all your might.
You'll find your courage quite recovered,
And he will flee when thus discovered.

SPIRITS

See that apple, ripe and ruddy,
There on yonder lofty shelf
In the corner of my study
I can scarcely reach, myself.

Only yesterday I bought it,
Tempted by its rosy glow;
Though my little ones besought it,
'T was intended just for show.

They are babes so frail and tender,
They're so innocent and young;
Who could but be their defender
'Gainst malicious slander's tongue!

On the cheek of yonder apple
There's a scar that lately came.
Oh for wisdom fit to grapple
With the question—Who's to blame?

There are little tooth-marks in it,
Yet it has not moved at all.
I was absent scarce a minute—
They're so innocent and small!

Can it be that spirits haunt us,
Leaving tooth-marks here and there?
Playing idle pranks to taunt us,
Marking footprints on a chair?

They are babes so frail and tender,
Far too wee for sin or guile;
Who could but be their defender?
I must ponder for a while.

OLD VALENTINES

Tiny maids with sunlit hair;
Sombre elves with eyes cast down;
Princess dainty, debonnaire;
Auburn tresses, gold, and brown.
Some were gay and some were grave;
Shyly swayed by blame or praise;
Others ruled their willing slave
With their tiny tyrant ways.
Time has blent them all for me
In one golden memory.



AN OLD CHRISTMAS CAROL

Oh wake ye, little children,
And be of goodlie cheer.
Yon sun so high along the sky
Hath shone two thousand year.
And once it saw a little child
In manger lying undefiled,
And all about the cattle mild
Did lovingly draw near.
So wake ye, little children,
And be of goodlie cheer.

Oh wake ye, little children,
And let each heart be gay.
Good Will to Men they carolled then,
And why should ye delay?
Awake, awake, and rise and sing,
And greet ye every living thing,
For man and beast did greet your King
On that first Christmas day!
Then wake ye, little children,
For this is Christmas day.

WHEN THE CHILD IS KING

Babe, so long ago enshrined
In a stable bare and gray,
Something of Thy sweeter mind,
Of Thy love for all Thy kind,
Rules us on Thy natal day.
And because a shepherd band,—
Sages, too, with gifts in train,—
Knelt and kissed a baby hand,
Yearning for some wee command,
So to-day a child shall reign.



SANTA CLAUS

Jingle of bell and clattering hoof
And shouts borne down the blast,
And muffled sounds from the snowy roof
While the winter wind sweeps past;
And sleepy eyes grow big and round,
And breaths are hushed at each mystic sound
While childish hearts beat fast.

The flick'ring flames, as they crack and glow,
Peep up the chimney wide,
And whisper then to the ghostly row
Of stockings side by side.
The eight-day clock, where it stands in state,
Holds fast its breath in the silent wait
For the king of Christmas-tide.

The days slip by of those happy times;
The paths we trod of yore
To the fairyland of the nurse's rhymes
Are barred by a closing door.
And we smile at the tales of a year ago
As childhood's truths into fables grow;
And lost is our goblin lore.

But yet to-day from the mantel-shelf
The stockings greet our eyes,
And our faith in the jolly Christmas Elf
On firm foundation lies.
For we see in merry lurking there
A father's love or a mother's care
Hid under the quaint disguise.

FATHER SPEAKS

Merry Christmas, one and all!

What a sunny holiday!

Eat our breakfast in the hall?

Just exactly as you say.

Move that tree a little bit,

I keep falling over it.

Children, show me all your toys,

There is room to spread them *here*.

Yes, that *is* a jolly noise,—

Hold it further from my ear!

Don't restrain 'em, let 'em play,

Christmas is the children's day.

Just the things you want have come?

Queer how Santy seems to know!

Yes, old fellow, pound your drum,

You may smash it sooner, so.

What? More slippers for your dad?

That makes seven pairs I've had.

Mary, give that child a lift,

Those are my cigars he's on.

Postman calling for a gift?

'Fraid that my last cent has gone.

FATHER SPEAKS

Don't you think it would be wise
Next month to economize?

Turn that baby up-side-down!

See—he's swallowing a wire!

Hello, Uncle! You in town?

Help? the Christmas tree's on fire!

Bring some water right away!

Whoop, Hurrah! It's Christmas day.



A MILK TOAST

Come, fill your glasses brimming up
And raise them overhead!
I'll pledge a toast before I sup,
So hasten with the foaming cup,—
It's nearly time for bed!

I sing not of the ruby wine,—
My years do not allow;
Though grown-ups praise the fruitful vine,
Clink glasses to this toast of mine,—
Long live the Mooley Cow!

A RONDEAU OF BABIES

As you must know, some men there be
Who like to hint that they are free
From nurs'ry thralldom, so they cry,
(As though to prove an alibi)
"All babies look alike to me."

To such a man the Fates decree
The storks shall come in groups of three,—
It does no good to hide or fly,
As you must know!

All babies look alike?—Ah me,
When they arrive, I well foresee
He'll gain a more discerning eye,
Or else he will discreetly try
With wiser persons to agree,—
As you must know.

THE WORLD IS SO SMALL

The world's a very little place,
And part of it is walls and floors,
And part's a pleasant sunny place
They call "outdoors."

They sometimes wheel me up the street
When all the world goes out to walk,
And everybody that I meet
Talks baby-talk.

The sun behaves in just the way
To most oblige a little tot;
It's daylight till I'm through my play,
And then it's not!

The raindrops never seem to fall
In any place where I may go.
The world must truly be quite small
To suit me so.

AFRAID

Little noises do not bite!
Darkness will not harm you!
See, my arms will hold you tight
When wee fears alarm you.

Wise ones say I do you wrong
Facing dangers for you;
You will not grow brave and strong
With me bending o'er you.

But the time is all too brief
When some pain or other,
And each baby fear and grief
Drive you to your mother!

NAMING HIM

You'd think, while they're trying to find me a name
That I'd have a right to a part in the game!
Through most of the morning my father has said
Just nothing but Aaron, while mother, instead,
Would settle *her* family name on my head;
Meanwhile they forget that I haven't been fed!



THE INTERPRETER

I cannot talk the grown-up way,
To tell them all I've thought and planned;
And nearly all that grown-ups say
I do not plainly understand.

But every little murmuring breeze,
Or sounds that whisper in a shell,
Or leaves that rustle on the trees,—
I understand them all quite well.

A BUSY MORNING

One morning mother had to be away
And nurse forgot me for a little while;
Oh, when I get to thinking of that day
I lie quite still and shut my eyes and smile.
Then grown-ups say, "He sleeps, the little dear!
And dreams an angel whispers in his ear."

It really isn't often such a chance
Can come to such a little chap as me.
To get away from every watchful glance
And just start out to see what I can see;
To feel of things, and pound with all my might,
And learn which ones to break and which to bite.

It's true I often wish I hadn't tried
To see just what was in that little jug;
I spoiled a dress that was my special pride,
And made a dreadful black spot on the rug.
It wasn't all my fault, for I should think
A tippy table was no place for ink.

One memory I always shall enjoy,
Though I was spanked for doing it, alas!
I pounded hard that other little boy
Who made up faces at me from a glass.

He frowned and stuck his tongue out, and it's true
That those are things no proper child should do.

It's strange that in the rooms where grown-ups
stay

There should be such a lot of useless waste;
So many things that are no good for play,
And almost nothing that is good to taste.
And everywhere there is so much you find
That gets you into trouble of some kind.

It isn't fair that they should always keep
The nicest looking things so out of reach.
The road to some is very long and steep,
But on that day I got a chance at each.
And so I lie and dream, and smile and—wait.
I've had *one* day of life, at any rate.

HER GIFT

Her eyes, Her mouth, Her chin, so strangely small,
Her very hands, in such frail likeness made,
That one caress it seems might crush them all,
And so I gaze, and wonder, half afraid.

So wee a gift—yet wealth of many lands
Could never buy it in the richest marts!
So frail a gift—and yet those baby hands
Take mighty hold upon two human hearts.



FORTIFIED

Little dear heart, tiny wonderer,
 With round eyes that search clean through one,
Little tender-fisted sunderer
 Of my old world and my new one,—
Whence the sunbeam warm that dances
In those mirthful baby glances?

If that other world endowed thee
 With a soul of crystal clearness,
When our dullened earth has cowed thee
 With its mortal burden's nearness,
Who am I to give thee training
To withstand a life's explaining?

Even now I see an answer
In the little arms upflinging,
In thy dimples, wee entrancer,
And thy blithesome, wordless singing.
Love and gentleness and joying
May withstand old Earth's annoying.

Though this life's thick fogs be clouding
Recollections of some other,
May no mist-bank e'er come crowding
'Twixt thee, wee one, and thy mother.
Hers the gifts for thy preserving:
I but hope to share in serving!

A BABY AT THE PARTY

I found one night, when I awoke,
They'd brought me down the stair
To show me to some noisy folk
Who were all eating there.
Such silly things they did and said,
I cried the louder for my bed.

BABY'S FIRST CHRISTMAS

They took away my bottle
And they gave me toys and drums,—
I wonder do they act like that
Whenever Christmas comes?
I'm glad it's only once a year
They make such noises in my ear.

WHEN GRANDMA COMES

There's never any noise or fuss
When Grandma comes to visit us.
She always knows just what to do,
For me and for my mother too.
And it's so peaceful here at rest
All snuggled up against her breast.



BOOKS

The rows of letters on the page
Can talk, for grown-ups tell me so;
But pictures tell me, at my age,
Quite all the things I need to know.

But when there are no pictures there,
(And many books are made that way)
I open pages anywhere
And guess at what the letters say.

THE LONELY BABY

Whose dolly is you?

Dearie me! I declare

Your eyes are tipped up and they've pulled
out your hair;

And your snub little nose, and your fingers
and toes

And your curious clo'se

Kind of frighten me, too!

Whose dolly is you?

Whose dolly is you?

Dearie me! Can it be

They are tired of dollies, 'way over the sea?

Does nobody care for a baby out there,

But cuddles a bear

Or a doggie or two?

Whose dolly is you?

Whose dolly is you?

Did they send you to me

'Cause they know I'm as lonesome as lone-
some can be?

I'd like to have dollies like me, for a while,

But I've gone out of style,—

I'm nobody's, too!

Whose dolly is you?

INCONSISTENT

They say I'm a darling, and Joy-of-the-House,
They call me their Precious, and Ducky, and
Lamb;
I'm Bunny, and Honey, and Dear Little Mouse,
And nothing's too good for me, imp that I am.

My fingers and toes are so chubby and fat,
My nose is so dear, and my hair is like silk,—
But if they do love me as much as all that,
Why can't I have sugar in my bread and milk?



FIRST STEPS

Like a desert vast and cheerless
Stretch the nurs'ry lands.
Who could gaze with vision fearless
O'er those trackless sands?
Though there waits a shelter peerless—
Mother's reaching hands!

Eyes alight with exultation,
Lips that shape a shout;
Just a flutt'ring hesitation,
Just a sigh of doubt.
Dare—and launch a generation!
Sturdy legs, step out!

BABY'S EYES

Wise is the baby with eyes of brown,
Clenching each little hand;
Wrinkling its forehead into a frown,
Trying to understand.
Sweetest and wisest in all the town,—
Thoughtful baby with eyes of brown.

Mischievous baby with eyes of blue,
Laughing at other folk;
Planning and plotting the whole day through
Some little baby joke.
Laughing and happy and clever, too,—
Mischievous baby with eyes of blue.

Calm is the baby with eyes of gray,
Sweet little stay-at-home.
Near to the mother in work and play,
Never will care to roam.
More of a comfort from day to day,—
Calm little baby with eyes of gray.

BABY'S EYES

Wilful the baby with eyes of black,
Ruling us more and more.
Sunbeams follow the storm-cloud's track
Brighter than those before.
Heart is fonder when smiles come back,—
Wilful baby with eyes of black.

A LULLABY

Lie still, my little one, shadows are falling,
Closing thy wide-open, wondering eyes;
Hark how the voices of dreamland are calling
Sweet to my little one here where she lies.

Hushaby, baby mine, shadows grow deep;
Shut those blue eyes of thine, lie still and sleep.
Naught is affrighting thee, dreams are inviting
thee,
Mother is near to thee—sleep, darling, sleep.

What dost thou see in thy faraway gazing?
What dost thou say in that cooing of thine?
In thy strange tongue is it wisdom amazing,
Wise little visitor, baby of mine?

Raindrops are pattering, lull thee to rest;
Birds are all scattering each to its nest.
Darkness enfolding thee, mother is holding thee,
Angels are guarding thee—rest, darling, rest.

Drowsy, my little one? Twilight is darkening,
Birds are all twittering sweetly good night;
Whisper thy dreams to me, mother is hearken-
ing,
Listening over thee, clasping thee tight.

Lullaby, little one, sweet be thy sleep;
Hushaby, pretty one, slumbering deep.
Darkness may cover thee, angels watch over
thee,
Mother is near to thee—sleep, darling, sleep.

AT ONE WEEK OLD

He will be straight and strong and fair,
With eyes that have a laughing flash;
A rumple always in his hair,
And—if he likes—a short mustache.

His voice must be a grumbly bass,—
With nearly all his father's charm.
And when we stroll about the place
I'll love to lean upon his arm!

And when he marries some nice girl—
Oh me! he'll do it soon, I fear—
I'm sure she'll love the little curl
Like that behind his daddy's ear!



UNFULFILMENT

I see an upland pasture, clover-blown,
Where grave-eyed cattle graze the meadow-side;
And in the wavy blot of shade a lonely tree has
thrown,
A little boy lies dreaming, open-eyed.
And something in the fair-gowned buckwheat fields,
And in the hill lined out against the sky,
And in the kindly spreading tree a subtle bondage
wields;
I look—and lo! the little boy is I.

Afar, blue peaks that one time edged the world—
White clouds—a boyhood's realm of Maybe-so;
And from the deeps of memory a tapestry's unfurled
Of small boy visions, woven long ago.

And years and deeds went always hand in hand.

In those fair pictures. Yet to-day there seems

A small voice crying sorrowf'ly from sky and clover-
land

That I am not the figure of the dreams.

THEN AND NOW

I can remember, in the long ago,
How, when the evening shadows slowly grew,
I nestled closely, as I loved to do,
And begged a story in the twilight glow.
But when those mother accents, sweet and low,
Began some bed-time tale all strange and new,
I cried—Not that one! Let me listen to
The one you told last time—the one I know.

Was I so different in the days of yore?
I sit and dream anew the joys of old,
Crying to Fate to send them back once more,
Distrusting what the future may unfold.
Tho' sweet the hope be of what lies before,
Sweet is the mem'ry of the tale that's told!

LITTLE BOY REALM

*Little Boy Realm is far afeld,
And blind is the road, they say;
But the King and Queen, by the power they
wield,
May lead, or may bring away.*

Kindly firm is the royal rule,
Kind are the kingly eyes;
And day by day sees gentler sway
'Neath sunny boyland skies.

But wander-spirits calling us,
Or sunbeams ling'ring fond
On some vague peak, roused us to seek
A path to the beyond.

That loving, kingly hand reached out
To shoulders, level high;
Some spark there ran, as man to man,
And boyhood's realm flew by!

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Gently sweet is the gracious Queen,
Love dwells within her eyes;

LITTLE BOY REALM

And day by day she toils away
To weave some new surprise.

Her little kingdom brooks no change;
Though some may roam afar,
Its hearth-fires burn against return,
And every door's ajar.

A tired head against her knees,
Dear chidings, grave or gay,
And 'neath her hand this grown-up land
Slips suddenly away.

*Little Boy Realm lies toward the dawn,
But the highway none may know;
And oh, if the King and Queen be gone,
How then may I come and go?*

REVISITING

If one clear road you cannot find,
 Since they two laid their scepters down,
Some fainter paths there are that wind
 Through valleys to a far-off town,
Where many dear-remembered things
Call childhood back on certain wings.

That wall you climbed with all your might,
 The while you tore your stocking knees,
Has shrunk to such a puny height
 You mount upon its crest with ease.
The tree that was too thick to "shin"
By some odd means has gotten thin.

That vast expanse you scanned with care,
 Then crossed with frightened hurrying feet
Lest traffic overtake you there,
 Is now a quiet village street.
Each doorway wide and gatepost high
Seem smaller to your startled eye.

Old friends that pass look up to smile,
 Who used to greet you smiling down;
A magic spell, in this long while,
 Has somehow fallen on the town.

Yet strange! You seem to be again
As small a boy as you were then.

The little tree that once was tall,
The quiet street that stirred your fears;
Your little boyhood's kingdom small
Have drawn you backward through the years.
And some old teacher's kindly tone
Belies his words—"How you have grown!"

The winding path to boyhood days
Is sometimes very hard to find;
And yet you trod it when your gaze
Survey old scenes long left behind.
While strangers, passing, never guessed
The rising turmoil in your breast.



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